

The

**HOW  
AND  
WHY**

*Wonder Book of*

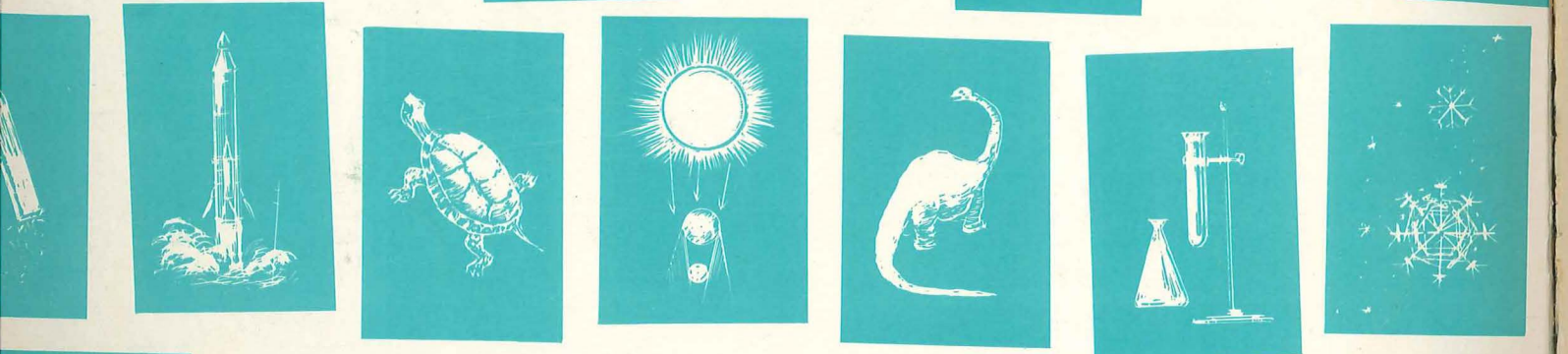
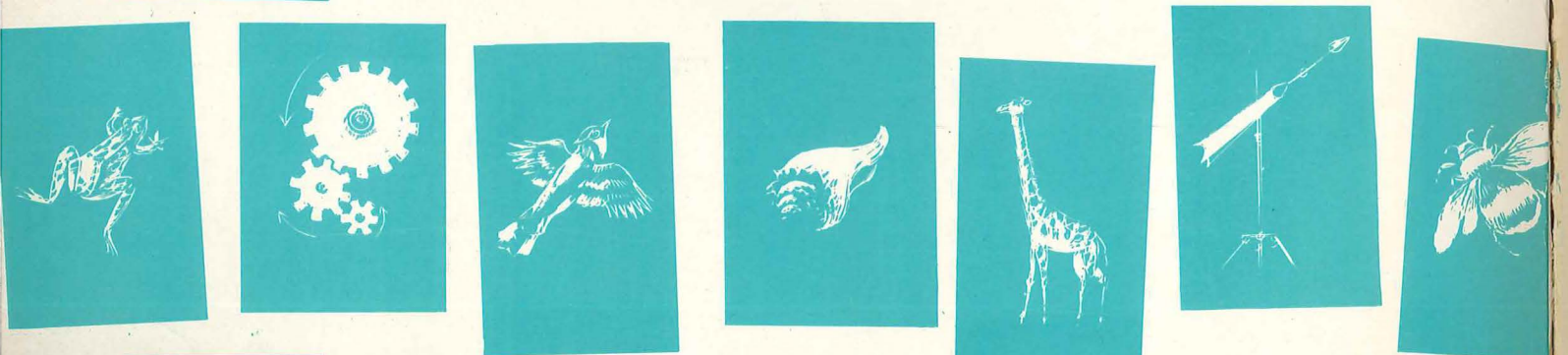
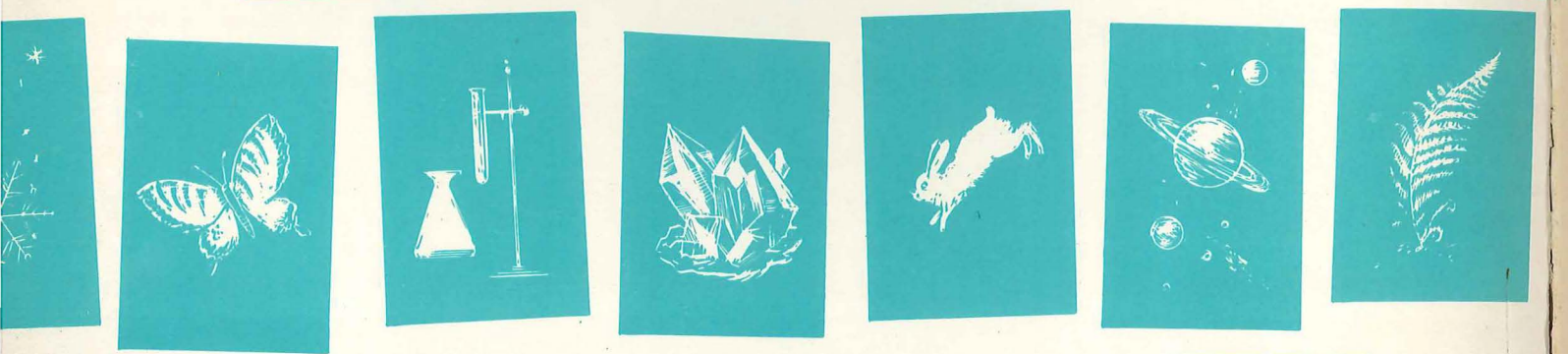
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# WORLD WAR II









# THE HOW AND WHY WONDER BOOK OF **WORLD WAR II**

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## Introduction

In September, 1939, World War II had begun. Six long and perilous years later it was over. The memory of it is painted vividly in the minds of most adults today, but it is only history to young people born after the war's end. Thus, a book is useful in acquainting young readers with this relatively recent event.

What led up to the explosion of the "powder keg" in Europe, and what happened during the years of the war? *The How and Why Wonder Book of World War II* clearly interprets the feelings and motives of men and nations, reviews the events that led up to the conflict, and narrates the essential activities of the major nations involved in that most devastating of all wars.

It is interesting to note the many new words and phrases that came into the world's vocabulary during World War II. Quisling, blitzkrieg, kamakazi, Spitfire, atomic bomb, Dunkirk, and war crimes are just a few of the expressions that took on special meaning. Understanding them helps understand the war.

What can be learned from a study of past wars that will help us on the road to world peace? That is the challenging question that might well direct one's reading of this book. Boys and girls studying this book in their history and social studies classes and reading it at home will be building understandings and insights by which they can help contribute to the universal hope that "no historian of the future will ever have to write a book about 'World War III.'"

*Paul E. Blackwood*

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Washington, D. C.*

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# The Years Before the War

Why was the world  
headed for war?

In the spring of 1939, the whole world was sitting on a gigantic powder keg that was all set to explode. The fuse, in fact, had already been lighted in a dozen places. It was burning slowly but surely. Sooner or later, the explosion was certain to come. It was only a matter of time.

Why was the world about to plunge into a terrible war that would cost millions of human lives and hundreds of billions of dollars? To find the answer, we must first take a brief look at what was going on in Italy, Germany, Japan, England, France, Russia, and the United States.

After the close of World War I (1914-1918), the leading nations of the world had agreed that, in the future, all international disputes would be settled by peaceful means. They pledged never to engage in another war.

But in the years that followed, the leaders of three nations — Germany, Italy, and Japan — were not willing to live up to this idealistic agreement. They openly desired some of the lands and resources of neighboring countries and secretly planned to take them by force of arms.

In Italy, in 1922, Benito Mussolini had taken over control of the government from a weakling king. Although he allowed the king, Victor Emmanuel, to stay on as a figurehead, Mussolini made himself the supreme dictator. As the head of his all-powerful political party, the Fascists, he rewrote all the laws to suit himself. He dreamed of

turning Italy once more into a great empire, as it had been in the days of the ancient Romans.

Mussolini began to put his schemes of conquest into action in 1935 by invading and conquering the small and primitive African kingdom of Ethiopia. The barefoot Ethiopians, armed only with spears and a few outdated guns, were no match for the Italian tanks and bombing planes. Within a few weeks, Ethiopia was an Italian colony, and Mussolini was planning further conquests.

At about this same time, in Germany, Adolph Hitler had made himself dictator of that country. Germany had been defeated in World War I, for which she had been held solely responsible. All of her overseas possessions had been taken away. She had been required to make payment of money and materials as reparations, or compensation, for the losses suffered by the victors. Her boundaries had been revised and her armed forces limited to prevent future aggression.

Hitler promised that he and his followers, called Nazis, would change all this. He was determined to build Germany once again into a great world power. His plan, at first, was to conquer all of Europe and create a "greater Germany" that, in his own words, would endure for a thousand years. In Hitler's sick, mad mind, he was already dreaming of world conquest, a world in which Germany would be the leading power on earth. The German peo-





ple, he thought, were the "master race" and all other peoples were inferior.

Great segments of the population, disillusioned at the widespread unemployment, an unstable economy, and bitter over their losses in World War I, found encouragement in Hitler's wild speeches. Democratic Germans, opposed to the dictator's program, were either killed, imprisoned, or forced to escape the country.

In defiance of the peace treaty that followed World War I, Hitler began building up Germany's armed forces. When they were strong enough, he started to carry out his grand plan for European conquest.

While these events were going on in Italy and Germany, France was trying to rebuild herself out of the ruins of the war. Although the French had been victorious in World War I, most of the battles had been fought on their own soil and much of their land had been devastated. The French, though concerned, were too busy to pay much serious attention to what was happening across the Rhine in Germany or south of the Alps in Italy.

The English also did not seem to be fully aware of the storm that was brewing. They had the world's greatest navy, and were confident that no enemy could invade their island country. They saw what Hitler and Mussolini were doing, but they had other things on their minds. Chief among these was the rebuilding of their world-wide trade, which had all but collapsed while they were fighting, and helping to win, the First World War. England refused to believe that another world war could happen.



ITALY



GERMANY



FRANCE



ENGLAND



RUSSIA



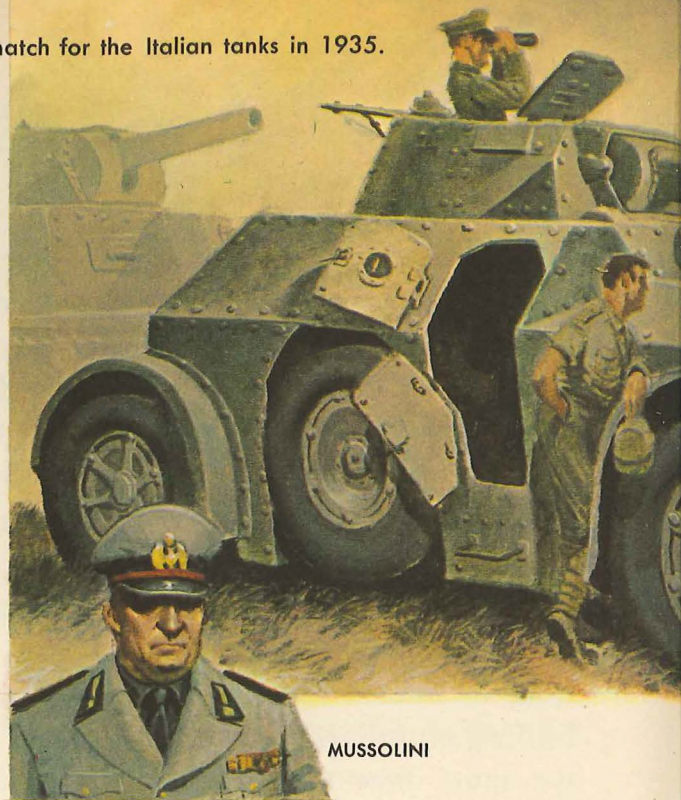
JAPAN



CHINA



U.S.A.



MUSSOLINI

Meanwhile, the vast land of Russia was in the process of recovering from the bloodiest revolution in history, which had broken out in 1917. In this revolution, the Communists had seized the reins of government from the Czars. Eventually, a revolutionary leader, Josef Stalin, emerged as dictator. The Communists planned, first, to make their own country strong. When that had been done, they intended to expand their Communistic form of government all over the rest of the world. Like Italy and Germany, the Russians were building up a powerful army and air force.

But the Russians were working quietly, and most of the world paid little attention to them. Russia had always been a big, but backward, country; and the leaders of the other nations blindly assumed that it always would be.

The fuse was also burning on the Pacific side of the world. The Japanese Empire had emerged as a world power after its defeat of Russia in 1905. Now





HITLER

HIROHITO

it was planning the conquest of all Asia. This would include about one-half of the world's population and a large portion of its natural resources. The Japanese people believed that their Emperor was descended from the Sun Goddess, and that it was his divine mission to rule the world.

The Japanese had begun their plan of conquest before either Italy or Germany. In 1931, they invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria and set up a puppet state called Manchukuo. In 1937, with China torn by civil war, they invaded the remainder of the country. The Japanese, in the spring of 1939, were already well on their way to their dream of glory.

In the United States, two factors were at work that prevented Americans from paying much heed to the prophetic events that were happening in other parts of the world.

One of these was the fact that the nation was just recovering from the

great depression of 1929, when many people were unable to find jobs and many businesses had failed. Americans were chiefly concerned with recovering their former prosperity.

The second of these factors, and perhaps the more important one, was that most of the American political leaders believed that the United States should not become entangled in the affairs of foreign governments. "America is protected by two great oceans," they said in effect, "the Atlantic on one side and the Pacific on the other. Let the nations of Europe and Asia fight among themselves if they want to. We will remain at peace."

So England, France, and the United States were too involved in their own affairs to become very alarmed at the plans for world conquest that were being hatched in Italy, Germany, Russia, and Japan.

The fuse was burning short, and the powder keg was ready to blow up.



# The Coming Storm

How did the war start?



Both Italy and Japan had already set their machines of conquest in motion. Now Germany joined the game. Hitler found an excuse for his moves of aggression in the terms of the peace treaty that had ended World War I, or simply denounced them.

His first move was to scrap the World War I agreements that limited Germany's armed forces. Then he sent his army into the Rhineland, the border region with France. According to treaty, this area was to remain demilitarized; that is, free of troops and military fortifications. Now, France was suddenly faced with German soldiers at her border. Surprised, unprepared to fight, and wishing to avoid open conflict, the French did nothing to stop Hitler.

Then Hitler and Mussolini signed a mutual-aid pact that was known as the Rome-Berlin Axis. The European nations openly began to choose up sides.

For some years, Hitler had been building the Nazi party in Austria. Now, with the support of many Aus-

trians, he marched his troops into that country. The German army took over the Austrian government, which had been forced to resign, and Hitler announced that Austria was a part of the German nation. This union, or *Anschluss*, was in violation of the World War I peace treaty, which had forbidden a union with Austria.

At the World War I peace conference, many of the old boundaries in central Europe had been changed, and a number of new nations had been created out of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. The treaty makers had affirmed that the people of these regions had a right to determine for themselves the form of government under which they would live. Now Hitler turned this principle of "self-determination" to his own purposes.

He declared that many German people were being forced against their will to live in a certain part of Czechoslovakia, and that it was the duty of the German government to liberate them. Hitler then declared his intention of annexing this part of Czechoslovakia, known as the Sudetenland, in which a large number of German-speaking people lived, and in which he had also been building up the Nazi party. At this, the English at last became alarmed. It looked as though Hitler was going to gobble up all of central Europe without any opposition. But Great Britain, like



France, was not prepared for war, and was willing to do almost anything to avoid it.

The Prime Minister of Great Britain, Neville Chamberlain, and the Premier of France, Edouard Daladier, went to Germany to confer with Hitler about the Sudetenland problem. At their famous meeting in Munich, Hitler promised that the Sudetenland would be the last piece of European territory he would demand. The British and French leaders agreed, and Prime Minister Chamberlain went back to England proclaiming that the Munich Pact assured "peace in our time."

The Prime Minister was hardly back in England when Hitler marched his army into the Sudetenland — and then, later, seized the rest of Czechoslovakia as well.

In Italy, the armies of Mussolini invaded and conquered the little Balkan country of Albania. At about the same time, Hitler began to make demands upon Poland for certain territory that had once been a part of Germany.

Now the powder keg could go up in smoke and flames any minute. Although sadly unprepared, both France and Great Britain signed agreements with Poland to give her military help in case the Germans should attack. At the same time, they urged the Poles to avoid any act against Germany that might appear to be warlike.

The British and French had hoped to bring Russia into an alliance with themselves against the Rome-Berlin Axis. But, without warning, the Russians suddenly signed a non-aggression

pact with Germany. By its terms, each agreed not to take up arms against the other in case a European war burst into flames.

Both countries had selfish reasons for such a pact. Germany wanted to keep Russia off the side of England and France. The Russians wanted to strengthen their own defenses against Germany, and not get involved with the trouble that seemed to be brewing in Poland.

At this time, in the late summer of 1939, the German land forces numbered about two-and-a-half million men. They were then the best equipped, best trained soldiers in the world.

Hitler was at last ready for his big war of conquest. He started the ball rolling by announcing that Polish troops had fired on German troops. Of course, this was a lie, but Hitler wanted an excuse to attack. The fact that he had to make it up himself didn't bother him. He declared that if these "attacks" went on, he would march his army into Poland in order to defend Germany. Then, early in the morning of September 1, 1939, the German army crossed the Polish border. World War II had begun.

The Poles had an army that was almost as large as the Germans'. But they were sadly lacking in the weapons of modern warfare. They were hopelessly outclassed in terms of tanks, airplanes, and heavy guns. In the air, Poland was outnumbered ten or twelve to one; and their planes, which were mostly old-fashioned models, were no match for the efficient German bombers.



On that morning of September 1, the German army, or *Wehrmacht* as it was called, and the German air force, or *Luftwaffe*, struck Poland with a lightning blow. Hitler's generals had planned the attack well. The dive bombers flew in first, blasting the countryside underneath them. Then the columns of German tanks slammed into the Polish defenses like a battering ram.

Most of Poland's air force was destroyed before its planes could get off the ground. And most of the army was surrounded and crushed before it had a chance to take up defensive positions. At the same time the *Luftwaffe* dive-bombers pulverized Warsaw, Poland's capital city, with the first large-scale, all-out air raid in history.

The brave Poles did not give up without a struggle. But that struggle was doomed to defeat before it started. The cream of the Polish army was horse cavalry, and they made a gallant attempt to resist. But men on horses have no chance against men in airplanes and tanks. One by one, these pockets of defenders were wiped out by the advancing Germans.

The pilots of German scouting planes could see every move that the Poles were making. On the other hand, having no airplanes left, the Poles had no way of knowing where the German invaders would strike next. The Polish cavalry was ineffective as scouting units.

By the end of the first week, the war was as good as over. The Polish army was broken up into scattered units of resistance, which the Germans were crushing piecemeal. At the end of the

third week, virtually all fighting had stopped.

On September 17, the Russian army moved into Poland, and on the 28th, Russia and Germany divided that unhappy country between them. Poland no longer existed as a nation. The first stage of World War II was finished almost before the rest of the startled world realized that it had begun.

A Polish Government-in-Exile was formed in England, however, and Polish units attached to the British armed forces took part in the Allied offensive against Germany.



POLISH  
FLAG





## The "Quiet" Western Front

What was the  
"phony war"?

On September 3, two days after Hitler's attack on Poland, both Great Britain and France honored their agreements by declaring war upon Germany. But then a curious thing happened. Neither of them made any attempt to go to Poland's aid.

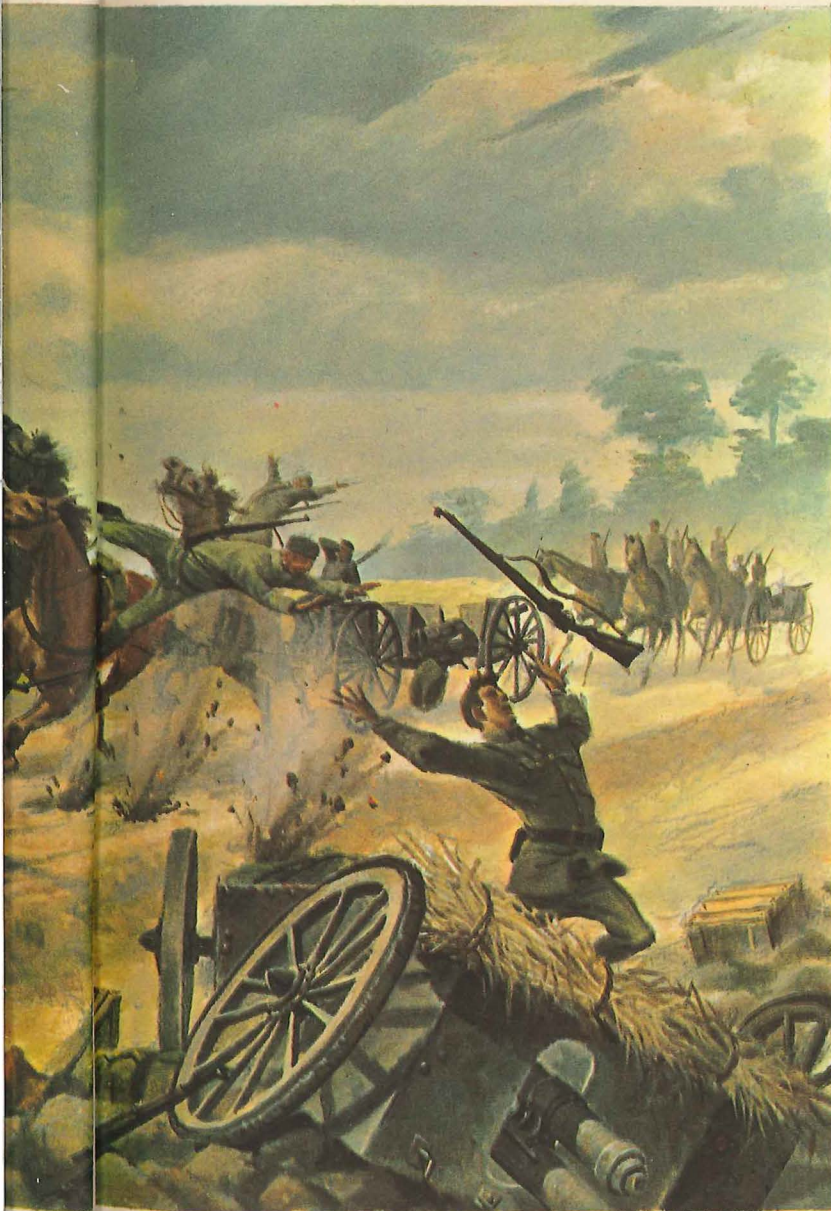
Instead, a few British divisions landed in France and took up positions behind the Maginot Line. This was a strong line of fortifications that had been built during the period between the two World Wars. It extended all the way

along the border that separated France from Germany.

The French assumed that any future war would be fought from fixed positions and lines of trenches and fortifications as World War I had been. And so they and the British felt secure behind these mighty forts. Both countries began to build up their armies while they sat behind the Maginot Line and waited for the Germans to attack. But the preparations proceeded slowly.

The Germans, on the other hand, had no intention of fighting a static war. They were not going to try a frontal attack on the powerful Maginot Line. Instead, they planned to swing their columns of tanks and marching men around the northern end of the Maginot Line, through Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg, and fall upon the Allied defenses from behind. The Maginot guns, firmly embedded in the steel and concrete of the massive forts, could be fired only in the direction of Germany. They could not be turned around, and were therefore useless against an assault from the rear.

The original war plan of the German High Command had been to attack in October, two weeks after the surrender of the Poles. But the campaign in Poland had taught them that good weather for their tanks and bombers was essential to the kind of "lightning war" they intended to employ. However, the weather forecasts were not as



On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. World War II had begun.



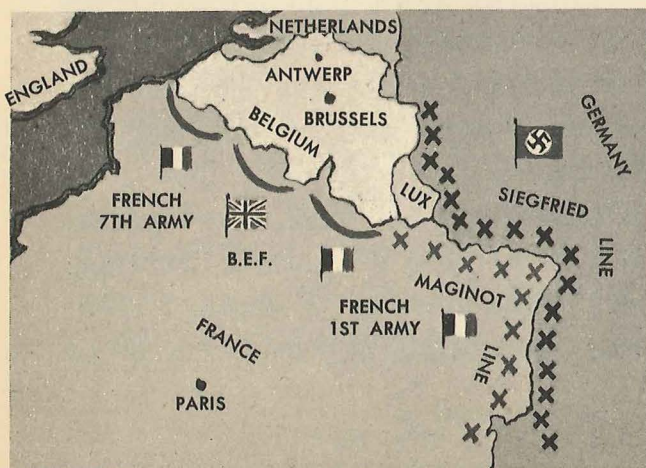
favorable as the German generals considered necessary for a quick victory, and the attack was postponed.

After two more postponements, the assault was finally put off until the spring of 1940. So, all winter long, the Allies, as the French and British were called, sat behind their fortifications and did little or nothing. This period was labeled the "phony war."

Meanwhile the Russians, who had taken a part of Poland after the German victory there, made a surprise attack of their own against Finland, their tiny neighbor to the northwest. After their seizure of Polish territory, the Russians had demanded military bases in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland. The first three of these little nations agreed much against their wills. But the independent-minded Finns flatly refused. Therefore, on November 30, 1939, Russian planes staged an air raid on Helsinki, the Finnish capital. A few days later, Russian divisions swarmed across the border.

But the Russians did not find the going in Finland as easy as the Germans had found it in Poland. In the first

The French and the Germans faced each other from behind the Maginot and Siegfried lines. The border between France and neutral Belgium was guarded by British Expeditionary Forces (B.E.F.) and French units.



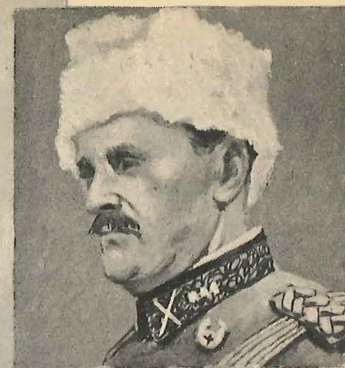
place, the Finnish army, though small, was superbly trained. Secondly, the Russians attacked in the middle of the sub-Arctic winter. The Finns fought on skis, and the Russians bogged down in the deep snows. Russian planes began a systematic bombing of Finnish cities and communication centers, but flying conditions were bad and the damage was not great.

Fighting in the Finnish forests, in the deep snow, Russian losses were extremely high. But their numbers in tanks and men were so superior that the Finns, although still fighting fiercely, could not stand up against the Russians. When spring approached, and the snows began to melt, the gallant little Finnish army was melting away just as rapidly.

The Finnish army was led by General Carl von Mannerheim, who was to become President of Finland in 1944.

In March, the Finns were finally forced to give up. Russia took a large part of southern Finland as spoils of war, and established political domination over the remainder.





General Mannerheim (above) led the Finnish Army in a gallant but losing war against superior Russian arms and manpower.

**What was the military reason for attacking Scandinavia?**

## The Invasion of Scandinavia

During the winter of 1939-1940, while all was quiet in the "phony war" along the western front, the German generals decided to attack and occupy Denmark and Norway. Their object was to establish air bases and naval bases for the attack that they planned to make against Great Britain.

Therefore, early on the morning of April 9, 1940, the *Wehrmacht* began to move in on both these peaceful Scandinavian countries. The Danes and Norwegians were taken completely off-guard.

Denmark had only a very small air force and army. As the Germans marched in, large flights of *Luftwaffe* bombers thundered over all principal Danish cities to frighten the government and the people. They dropped no

bombs, but it was obvious to the terrified citizens on the ground below that the Germans could, and would, drop bombs if any move was made to stop them.

In a few places, isolated units of the Danish army tried to resist the German columns, but they were quickly wiped out. The Germans said that they had not come as enemies, but only to protect the Danes against an Allied attack.

During the occupation, the Danish underground movement conducted a highly effective resistance. Its work in sabotaging the German war effort was so widespread and so successful, that a vast number of German soldiers were required to occupy the country.

Like Denmark, Norway was virtually helpless against attack. In addition, the Germans had laid their plans well ahead of time and with great care. A Norwegian politician named Vidkun Quisling,



who had formerly been Secretary of War, was a Nazi and thus a German sympathizer. He had agreed to see to it that such little defenses as the Norwegians had would be disrupted when the sneak attack came.

Consequently, when German troopships steamed into Norwegian harbors at several strategic points, the little Norwegian army found itself almost totally unprepared, thanks to the work of Quisling and the disloyal officers who were in the plot with him. These traitors had also informed the Germans of the location of all Norwegian arms and supplies, which further hampered the nation's defense.

But the forts along the coast put up a determined fight, and despite the heavy odds against them, the brave Norwegians succeeded in sinking three German cruisers.

The Allies immediately mounted a counter-invasion against the Germans in Norway. On April 13, a force of about 20,000 British Tommies — including a scattering of French and Poles — landed at several points on the Norwegian coast. Their intention was to reconquer Norway before the Germans could get organized to hold it.

"Now," people said to each other, "the Germans will find out what it is like to go up against real soldiers instead of helpless civilians."

But, unfortunately, the British were not soldiers of the regular army. They were Territorials, military units of Great Britain's home defense forces. They were not well-trained nor well-armed. On the other hand, the German units had been hand-picked from the best of

the *Wehrmacht's* crack mountain troops.

Furthermore, the Germans by then were in almost full control of all Norwegian seaports, and the Allied army was unable to land tanks, artillery and other heavy fighting equipment. As if that fact were not handicap enough, the Territorials had no air cover. They were completely at the mercy of the *Luftwaffe*, and took a furious and constant pounding from German bombers. In addition, they were out-maneuvered and out-fought on the ground.

The British hung on for about a month. Then it became apparent that there was no use in continuing a hopeless struggle. All of their scattered units withdrew except one that had captured the northern port of Narvik.

Then came the surprise German attack against Belgium, Holland and France in early May, and these last British units evacuated Narvik and managed to get back to England.

Thus the first clash between Allied and German armies ended in disaster for the Allies. It was going to be one in a long series of such disasters that would last for the next two years.

Soon, German units had spread all through Norway, and had the entire country firmly under control. The Germans later named Vidkun Quisling head of the puppet government that they created to rule Norway, and he continued to carry out their orders during the rest of the German occupation.

But all through the German occupation, a small but fierce undercover army of loyal Norwegians continued to fight the invaders, blowing up Nazi supply



During the grueling battle in the fjord at Narvik, two British destroyers and ten German ships were lost.

After their invasion of Denmark, the Germans landed at six points on the coast of Norway (red arrows). The British (blue arrows) sent help, but in vain.





centers and other installations. Thousands of other Norwegians, who had escaped the Nazis, fought bravely with the Allies in Europe.

Quisling was executed before a Norwegian firing squad for his crimes at the war's end in 1945. On that shameful morning of April 9, 1940, a new word entered the language of all the freedom-

loving peoples of the world. The word was *quisling*, meaning "traitor."

After the Norwegian defeat, Neville Chamberlain resigned in disgrace as Prime Minister of Great Britain, and that great wartime leader, Winston Churchill, succeeded him to pull the British together and give them courage for the long struggle that lay ahead.

## The Germans Break Through

What is a  
"blitzkrieg"?

Early in the morning of May 10, 1940, the waiting German army struck out at France. According to their preconceived plan, they did not try to break through the powerful Maginot Line, but instead swooped around it to the north through Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg.

These little countries were woefully unprepared when the massive German army — consisting of 150 full combat divisions, 10,000 tanks, and 5,000 planes — hit them a massive blow without warning. In fact, the army of Luxembourg consisted of only 300 soldiers and a handful of police.

Holland relied for her defense chiefly on the fact that much of the land lies below sea level and must be protected

by dikes. Elaborate plans had been made to flood the land in the event of an invasion, so that German tanks would be unable to move in the mud.

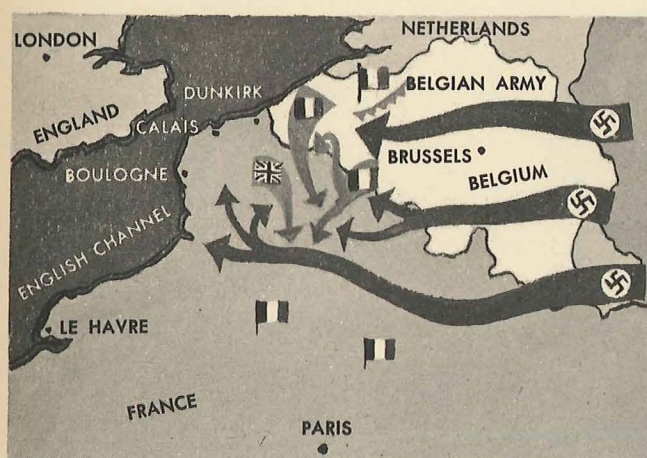
Before dawn, *Luftwaffe* bombers hit all the important Dutch airfields and knocked out the tiny Dutch air force. They also destroyed many of the larger Dutch cities, slaughtering thousands of helpless civilians.

The bombers were followed by flights of cargo planes that carried parachutists. Like Quisling and his followers in Norway, there were many Nazis in Holland. These Dutch traitors knew that the Germans were coming and were waiting to help them. Together, these traitors and Hitler's airborne troops quickly destroyed all the vital centers of communication and foiled the plan for flooding the country.



The bulk of the German army then came in over roads that were perfectly dry, and they occupied the country. A squad of parachutists made an attempt to kidnap Queen Wilhelmina, but she and her family managed to escape to England. There the Queen established a Government-in-Exile, as did all the other conquered countries.

Four days after the first attack, all of Holland was in German hands.



Without trying to storm the Maginot Line, the German army outflanked the Allied forces by invading Holland and Belgium and cutting the Allies off from the coast.

At the same hour that the Germans struck Holland, they also invaded Belgium. This country was much better prepared than Holland, although once more its army was not adequately equipped with tanks, heavy guns or fighter planes. The Belgians had a defensive line of forts along the German border, but they had made an incredible mistake while building them.

The Belgian government had contracted with German firms for the construction of many of these forts. The contractors at once turned the plans over to German authorities. In a remote section of Germany, duplicates of the Belgian forts had been built, and parachutists had been trained in methods of destroying them.

In the attack, the Germans employed their usual "blitzkrieg" tactics — a German word meaning "lightning war." The bombers went in first and destroyed cities and airfields. Then came the tanks to wipe out pockets of resistance. After them came the troops. Since the Ger-



The Dutch had flooded eastern areas of their country as a defense against German attack. But the Nazis invaded Holland from the south and also parachuted soldiers and heavy equipment into the country.







About 335,000 Allied forces succeeded in withdrawing across the English Channel from Dunkirk to England.

mans already knew the insides of the forts, they had no trouble taking them.

The German army kept coming through Belgium and Luxembourg into France. The French and British rushed armies to meet them, but these armies were hopelessly outclassed. Their tanks were very much inferior to those of the *Wehrmacht's*, and the Germans destroyed them. The *Luftwaffe* quickly knocked out all the airfields, and soon had complete control of the air.

In a few places, the Allied troops put up gallant fights. But they could not withstand the German tanks and planes.

German bombers destroyed the Allied radio and telephone centers, and no one part of the defending army knew where the other parts were. All was confusion.

The Germans swept on with clockwork efficiency. In fact, the tank columns moved so rapidly that they kept well ahead of their supply lines. Since tanks use a great deal of gasoline, there was a danger that the tanks would run dry. But the German commanders gambled that the confused French would make a blunder — which they did. In their haste to retreat, they neglected to remove the gasoline from roadside fill-



ing stations. With this vast supply of gas at their disposal, the German tanks kept rolling.

Now, seeing that all was finally lost, the British evacuated their last remaining troops in the north of France to a place called Dunkirk on the English channel. From here, the British hoped to rescue at least a part of their trapped army.

On the beach, the British soldiers took a terrific mauling from the German tanks and bombers. But miraculously, they managed to hold out until help came. That help took the form of 220 British warships of various sizes and types, and some 650 smaller craft, including pleasure boats and fishing trawlers.

The British Royal Air Force flew over from fields in England to give them air cover and fight off the German

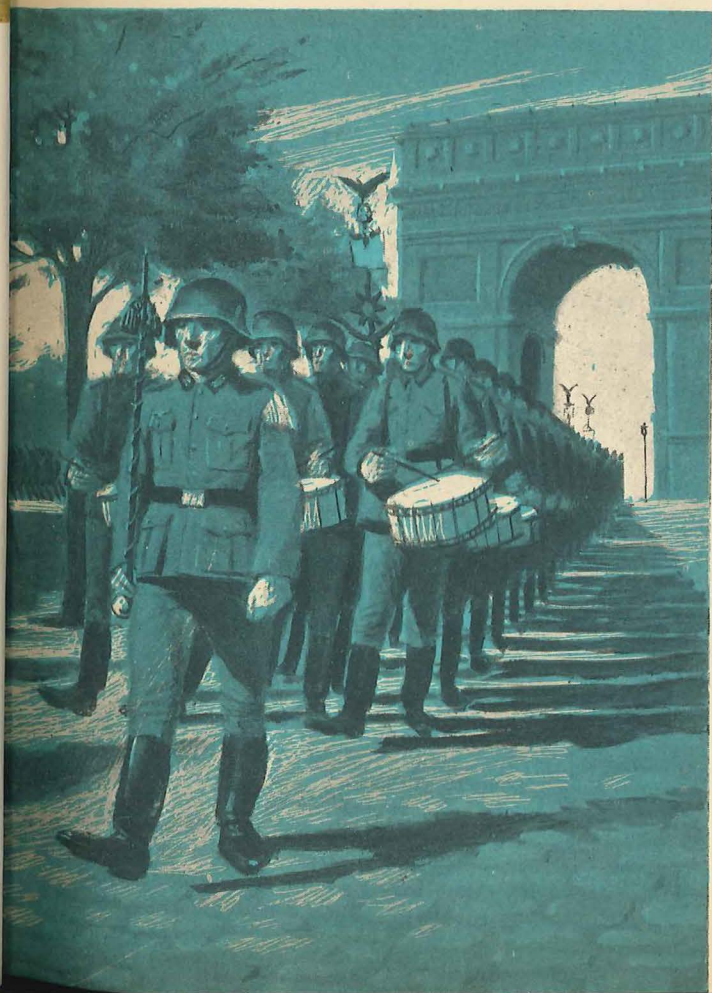
bombers. For this operation, the R.A.F. (Royal Air Force), unveiled a new type of fighter plane called the *Spitfire*. There were not many of them, but they proved to be vastly superior to the German planes. For the first time in the war, someone had come up with a better weapon than the Germans had.

About 335,000 soldiers made it back to England from Dunkirk. The rest had to be left to their fate. The French continued to fight scattered actions for a few more weeks, but it was clear that they did not have a chance.

One by one, the cities of France fell before the might of the invader. German troops entered Paris on June 14. The French military leader General Charles de Gaulle, who was in England on a government mission when his country surrendered to Germany, was determined to carry on the fighting in French North Africa. De Gaulle, who was to become President of France after the war, organized the Free French Army to combat the Axis. Like all the resistance armies established by the occupied countries, it was to prove a powerful force for eventual victory.

France surrendered to Hitler on June 24, 1940. Except for the relative handful of men who escaped from Dunkirk, the entire French, Dutch and Belgian armies — and the bulk of the British — were lost. Now Germany was triumphant in all of continental Europe.

On June 10, after the German victory was assured, Mussolini brought Italy



On June 14, 1940, German troops entered Paris, parading past the famous Arc de Triomphe (Arch of Triumph).



into the war as Germany's ally. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, speaking in Washington, called this action a "stab in the back."

Now Japan, although not yet involved in any way with the nations who were fighting in Europe, openly declared its sympathy and support for the German-Italian cause. The Rome-Berlin Axis became the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis.

In October, 1940, Mussolini, who had sent his armies to conquer Albania the year before, now invaded Greece.

The Greeks at once appealed to Great Britain for aid. Hitler sent troops to help the Italians.

Although the British were already in enough trouble, they sent units of their army and air force into that country. The British forces landed on the island of Crete, as well as on the Greek mainland. They were heavily outnumbered, but they fought like tigers. At last they were forced to withdraw to the coast, where the British Navy managed to take off about half the survivors. The rest went into hiding in the hills.

How did Great Britain respond to Germany's attack on her?

## The Battle of Britain

After Dunkirk, the new British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, said: "We shall go on to the end. We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches; we shall fight in the streets; we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender."

The British people were as brave as their leader; and it is well that they were. For almost all of the remainder of the war, English cities were subjected to frightful bombing raids.

The Battle of Britain, the first one ever fought entirely in the air, began on August 15. The raids continued for more than a month. Sometimes the

Germans came over in waves of as many as 2,000 planes. The *Spitfires* of the R.A.F., although greatly outnumbered by the *Luftwaffe*, were more than a match for them, and inflicted heavy losses on the German invaders.

At the same time, British bombers had begun attacking German bases in occupied France, and pounding the boatyards along the Channel coast, where the Germans were building landing craft for their intended invasion across the Channel.

The German planes were attacking at night, with no regard for specific targets. As a result, thousands of civilians were killed and much of London and other cities were destroyed. But the *Luftwaffe* failed to destroy the R.A.F.





The Battle of Britain demanded a superhuman effort from the British military and civilians.

With the *Spitfire*, the British had developed a superior fighter plane.



airfields, and the *Spitfires* kept coming up to meet the Nazi bombers and shooting them down.

The people of Britain refused to give up, and German plane losses were more than Hitler could take. The *Luftwaffe* discontinued its concentrated attacks, but the ruthless bombing continued on a smaller scale. The Germans had suffered their first defeat.





## The Germans Invade Russia

What was Hitler's  
most costly  
military mistake?

By the early summer of 1941, German engineers had built a huge fleet of landing barges in which the dreaded *Wehrmacht* planned to invade England. The British were braced for the attack, but most neutral observers agreed that they had little, if any, chance of repelling a German invasion in force.

Then Adolph Hitler did an incredible thing. Instead of attacking England which was lying nearly defenseless across twenty-five miles of water, he turned his armies eastward and

launched an all-out surprise attack on his ally, Russia.

It is known that subduing Russia was a part of his master plan of conquest. But why did he do it at this time, against the advice of his generals? Most experts agree that the German dictator had great respect for the British ability to fight back, even though they were then almost helpless after their defeat in France. On the other hand, Hitler held the Russians in complete contempt.

He planned to crush Russia in a

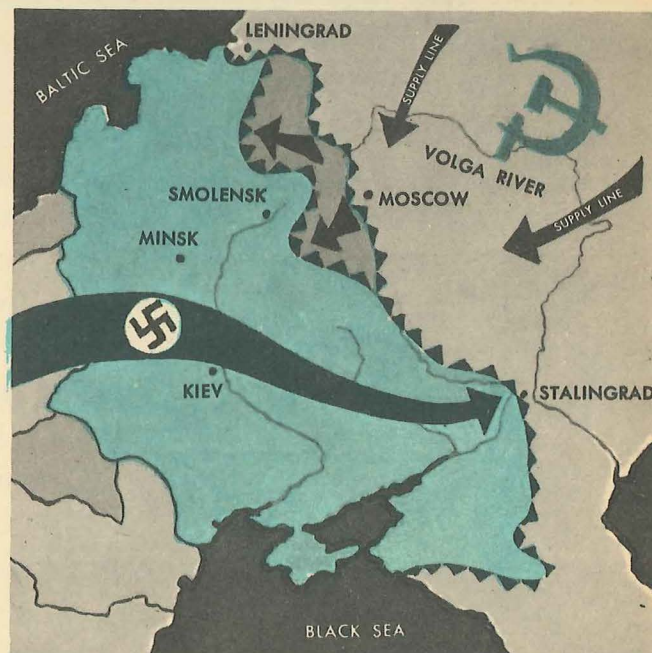




After an initial success, the German advance in Russia bogged down in mud and snow.

“quick campaign” before taking on what he thought would be the much more difficult task of winning the war against England. Of all Hitler’s many military mistakes, this one was the most costly.

The attack began on June 22, 1941, with the Germans employing their usual “blitzkrieg” tactics. Thousands of *Luftwaffe* bombers thundered overhead, pounding the Russian defenses. They were followed by the greatest massing of heavy German tanks and mobile ar-



The map (above) indicates the farthest line reached by the German invaders of Russia. At the height of the invasion, the German supply line extended 1,600 miles.



tillery yet employed in the war. The brute power of this vast German offensive seemed irresistible.

Caught off guard, the Russians began to fall back. As they retreated, they blew up the bridges and dams, burned the towns, destroyed the grain in the fields.

For the first weeks of the campaign, the German steamroller moved relentlessly ahead, capturing city after city as it moved to its prime objective, Moscow, the Russian capital. Then its tempo began to slow down. The timetable for Hitler's quick victory was upset.

In the first place, the Russian soldiers were better fighters than anyone had imagined. Although vastly outnumbered in guns, tanks, and planes, they fought every step of the way. Then came the rains of late summer, which turned the dirt roads of Russia into rivers of slimy mud. Snow fell earlier than usual in the fall of 1941, slowing down the advance even further.

When the Germans got to the town of Tula, the thunder of the big guns could be heard in Moscow. The Russian government moved to a city farther east, but the people determined to fight for their capital city.

They didn't have to. Tula was as far as the German offensive got before it was stopped. At the same time, German armies were stalled on all the other parts of the Russian front from Leningrad in the north to Odessa in the south. By early December, the great German army, hampered by snow and cold weather, could go no farther.

Now the Russians put the shoe on the

other foot. They began a massive counterattack. The Germans dug in on a defensive line and prepared to try to hold what they had taken. The failure of the Russian invasion changed Hitler's war of conquest into a war of defense.

The turning point was the long drawn-out battle of Stalingrad — a city that was named after the Russian dictator. (Only recently the city has been renamed Volgograd, since Stalin is no longer regarded as a Russian hero.)

Hitler staked the success of his whole Russian campaign on the capture of Stalingrad. He refused to heed the warnings of the members of his general staff, who urged that the wisest move would be to withdraw.

The Russian troops defended the city with deadly determination. The Germans fought their way into the city, house by house. Then their supply lines, which had been stretched dangerously thin, were cut off. They were stranded at the mercy of their Russian foes.

The German soldiers were starving, freezing and dying from disease. But for nearly two months more they managed to hang on in the face of mounting enemy attacks. Then, on January 31, 1943, after more than two years of hammering at the stubborn Russians in quest of a "quick" victory, the German commander surrendered his ragged army of 90,000 men. They were all that were left of the mighty force that had originally marched on the city.

After the defeat at Stalingrad, Hitler's armies never again won another major victory.



# The Arsenal of Democracy

What was  
Lend-Lease?

At first, the United States had made every effort to avoid taking sides in the war that was raging in Europe. But it quickly became obvious that the war was one between ruthless conquerors on one side and men who wanted to stay free on the other. And, of course, Americans were on the side of freedom.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt put into words what most Americans were thinking. In early 1941, when the British people were fighting with their backs against the wall, he said, "We will give all aid to Britain short of war." This meant that the British would be supplied with tanks, airplanes, guns and ammunition from American factories.

About that same time, the United States turned over fifty destroyers to the British Navy in return for air and naval bases in Bermuda and other British Islands in the Caribbean Sea.

Great Britain soon exhausted her cash reserves that were in American

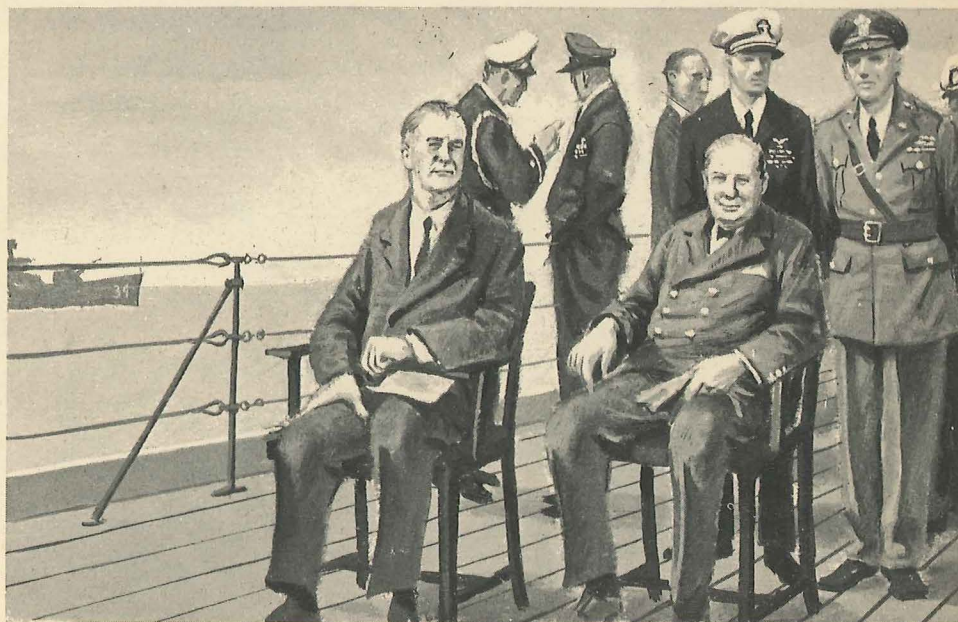
banks. The United States Congress then passed the Lend-Lease Act. By its terms, the British could buy war supplies in the United States on almost limitless credit.

Now the American industrial economy turned from peacetime production to almost all-out production for war. President Roosevelt said that America would be "the great arsenal of democracy."

In August, 1941, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill met on board the British battleship *Prince of Wales* in a bay in Newfoundland. Here they issued a joint document known to history as the Atlantic Charter. In it, the United States and Great Britain pledged that they would work together to keep the spirit of freedom alive in the world.

The United States was not yet actively in the war, but it was dangerously close to the brink.

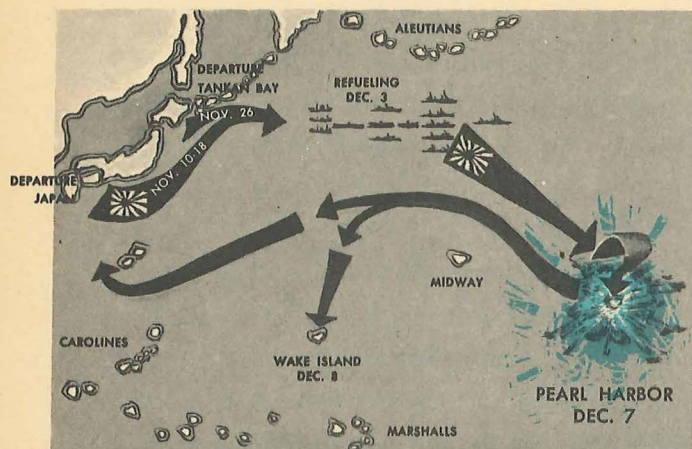
President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met in August, 1941, aboard the British battleship *Prince of Wales*.





# Pearl Harbor

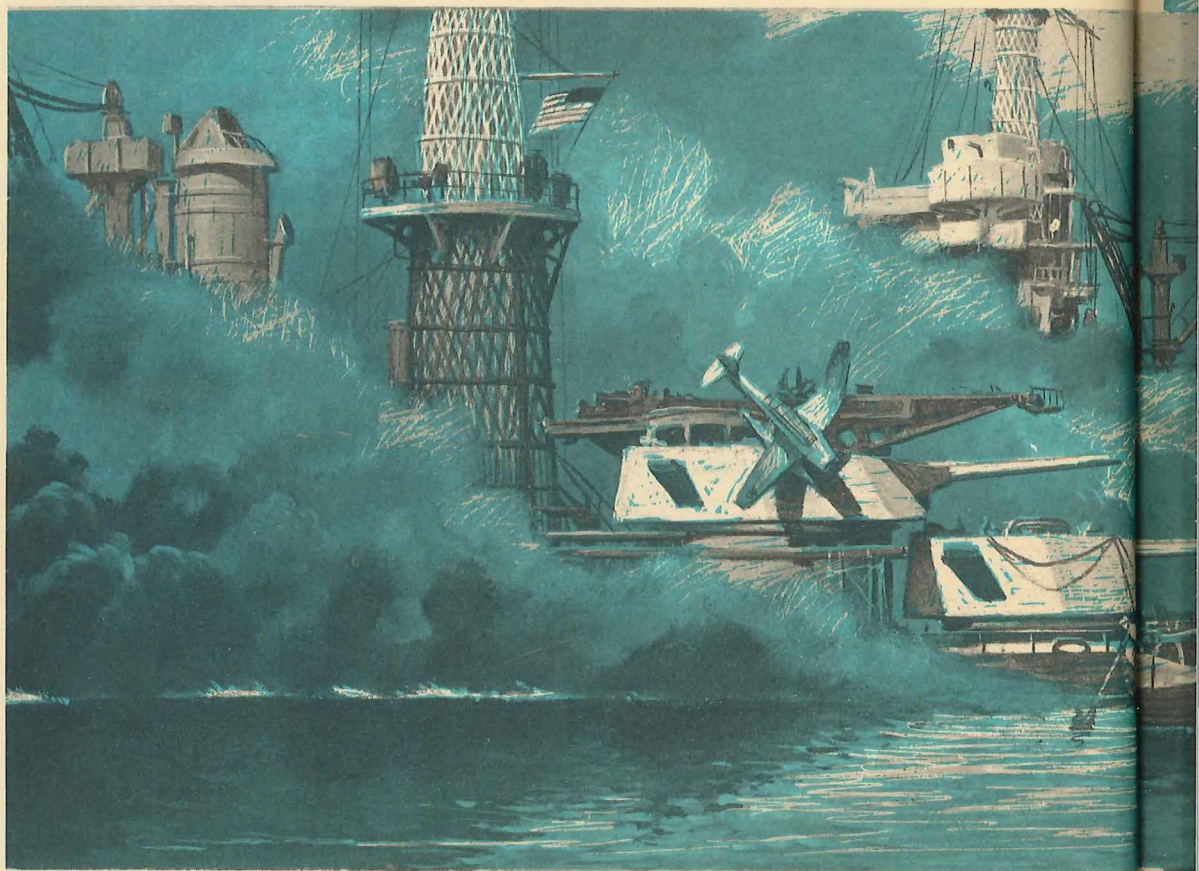
Why did the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor?



One month before the surprise air attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese task force, which included carriers from which fighter planes would launch their raid, set out from Japan. Returning to port after the attack, they struck at Wake Island.

It seemed to the warlords of Japan that now, the autumn of 1941, was the ideal time to put their plan for the conquest of all Asia into action. Germany, which had already defeated Holland and France, as well as other European countries, seemed to be on the verge of doing the same to England and Russia.

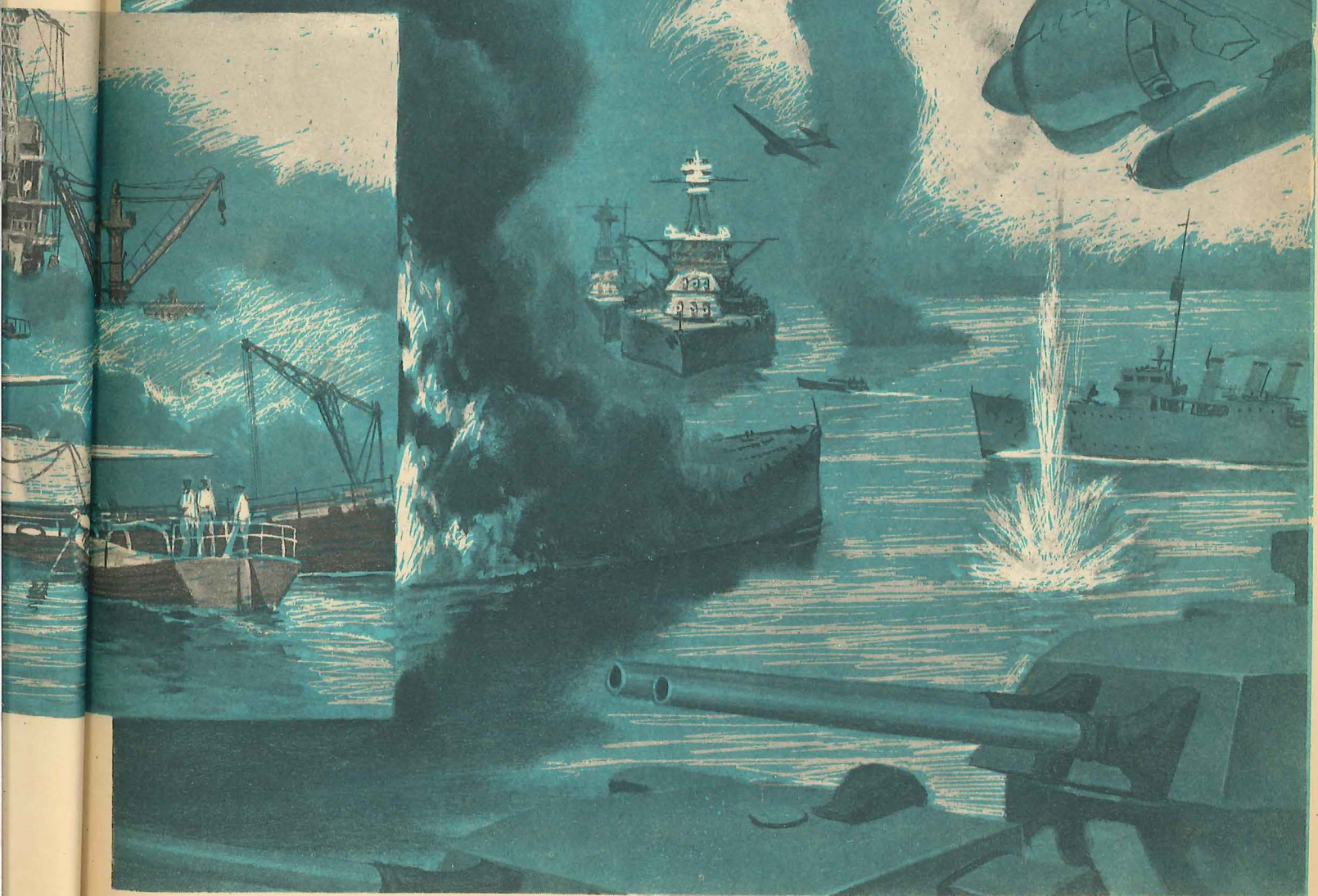
Thus, those European countries that held extensive possessions in the Far East would be eliminated, and Japan would have almost a free hand to do



The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor took the American fleet by surprise and brought the United States into the war on the side of the European Allies. (The attack, at right; detail of the damage, above.)



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as she pleased. Germany could rule the West and Japan could rule the East. Japan could take care of the West later, and eventually rule the world.

The only nation that might upset her plans was the neutral United States. And the only military force that the Japanese had any reason to fear was the United States Pacific Fleet, which was based at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

Therefore, they agreed, the first move would be to destroy the Pacific Fleet. With the fleet gone, it would be a year or more before the United States could fight back over 3,000 miles of ocean. By that time, the Japanese would have completed the conquest of the Philippines, Thailand, Burma, India, the Dutch East Indies and Australia. Then the United States, alone among the free nations, would have no choice but to ask for a negotiated peace.

In late November, a Japanese striking force of aircraft carriers and escort ships set out across the North Pacific under the cover of winter fog to strike the fatal blow.

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the city of Honolulu and the naval base of Pearl Harbor lay basking in the peaceful tropic sun. The battleships of the Pacific Fleet rolled gently at their moorings.

Then, without warning, at 7:55, the Japanese bombs began to drop. Their first targets were the battleships and the airfields. Within thirty minutes, the job was done. Every one of the battleships had been sunk or put out of commission. The important airfields had been destroyed, along with most of the Army and Marine Corps fighting and bombing planes. The loss in Ameri-

can lives from this sneak attack was appalling.

The next day, December 8, 1941, the Congress of the United States declared war on Japan. Three days later, on December 11, it declared war on the other two Axis powers, Germany and Italy.

Now, at last, the United States was in the war — making it truly a World War. Although the hitting power of the United States Navy had been destroyed, and the American Army was sadly unprepared, Uncle Sam rolled up his sleeves and settled down to the grim task of winning final victory.

## The Doolittle Raid

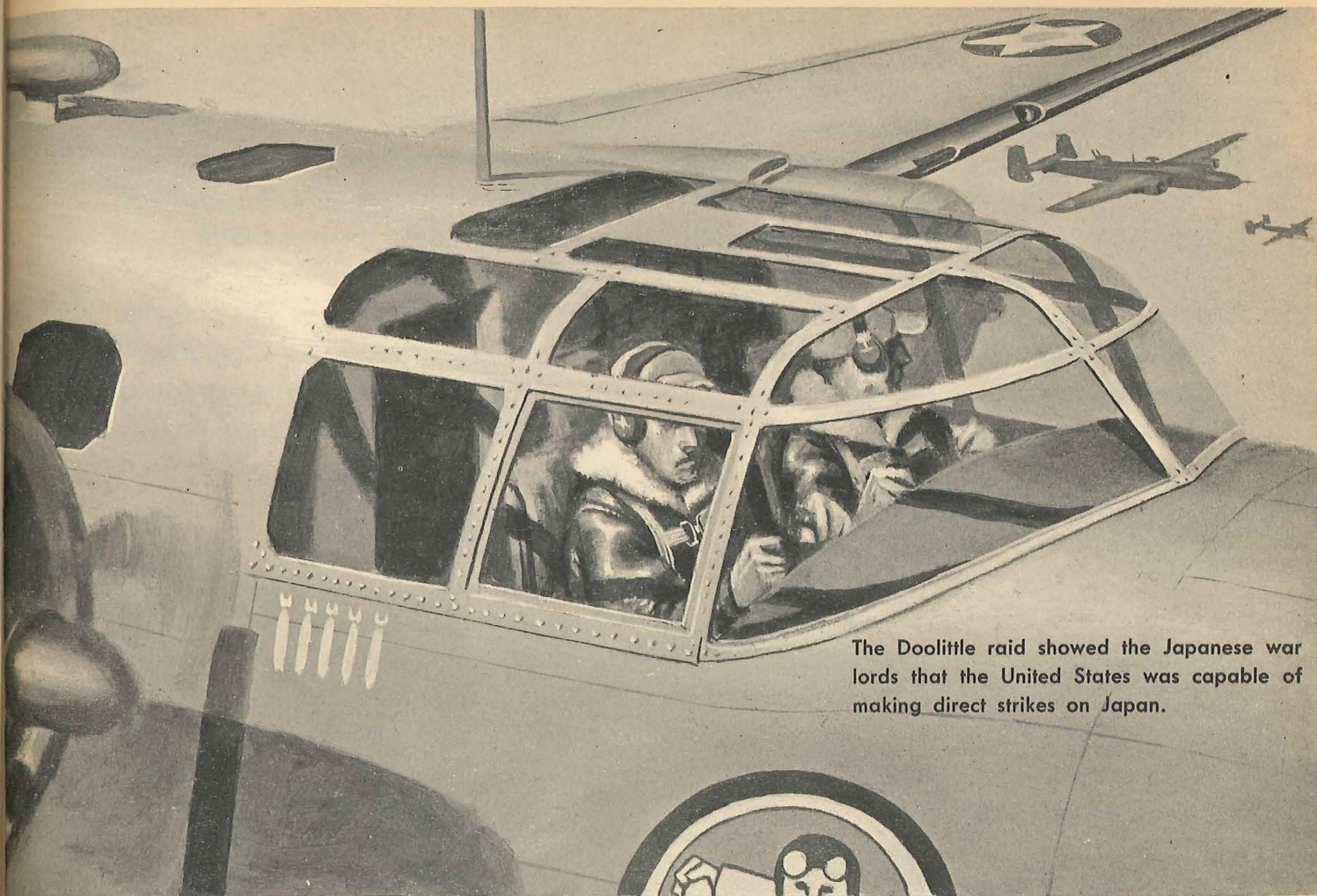
What was the raid's purpose?

When the United States found itself caught up in the war, the fortunes of the Allies were at their lowest ebb. Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, France, Greece and Yugoslavia had been overrun. Britain was bottled up on its little island. German armies were deep inside Russia. The United States itself had just suffered the worst naval defeat in history.

After Pearl Harbor, Lieutenant Colonel James C. Doolittle of the Army Air Corps had a bold idea. He proposed to bomb the Japanese mainland, and even Tokyo itself. Since there were no big bombers with sufficient range to cross the Pacific, he handpicked the crews of sixteen B-25 medium Army bombers and trained them to take off from the deck of an aircraft carrier.

On April 18, 1942, the B-25's left





The Doolittle raid showed the Japanese war lords that the United States was capable of making direct strikes on Japan.

the carrier *Hornet* 700 miles off the Japanese coast. They arrived over their objectives without being detected and dropped their bomb loads on Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe and Nagoya.

Colonel Doolittle's original plan had been to bring the *Hornet* within about 250 miles of Japan before releasing his planes. From this distance, the B-25's would have had enough fuel to accomplish their mission over the Japanese cities and fly on to friendly airfields in China. However, early in the morning, a Japanese trawler was sighted when the *Hornet* was still 700 miles at sea. The trawler was sunk at once by gunfire. But there was no way of knowing whether she had radioed the carrier's position to Japanese headquarters.

Colonel Doolittle decided to take no chances. He put his bombers into the air immediately, with himself piloting the lead plane.

Because of the extra 450 miles of flying, none of the B-25's made it to the Chinese airfields. A few crashed, but most were abandoned when they ran out of gas and their crews bailed out. Each of the sixteen bombers carried a crew of five. And of these eighty men, sixty-four (including Colonel Doolittle) survived. They were rescued by Chinese patriots and spirited through the Japanese lines to freedom. The raid accomplished little militarily, but it showed the Japanese that they had taken on a foe who was determined, and able, to strike back.



What was the U. S.  
Navy's new weapon?

## Battle for the Pacific

With its mighty battleships lying on the muddy bottom of Pearl Harbor, and the Japanese fleet in full control of the South Pacific, the United States Navy now turned to the weapon that the Japanese had used so effectively — naval air power.

As quickly as possible, an aircraft carrier task force was assembled and steamed toward the Marshall and Solomon Islands to challenge the navy of the Emperor. It consisted of the carriers *Lexington*, *Hornet*, *Yorktown* and *Enterprise*.

On May 7, 1942, this force detected a Japanese fleet and, in a surprise attack, sank one carrier, in addition to a number of transports and escort vessels. The next day, although the rival task forces were 200 miles apart, another battle took place between carrier-planes and ships. In it, the Japanese lost two carriers, one heavy cruiser, two destroyers, and several smaller ships. But the United States carrier *Lexington* was

so badly damaged that she had to be sunk by American gunfire.

The Battle of the Coral Sea, as it was called, was a victory for the United States, and the Japanese fleet returned to its bases to lick its wounds. This was the first naval battle ever fought in which surface ships did not come in sight of each other.

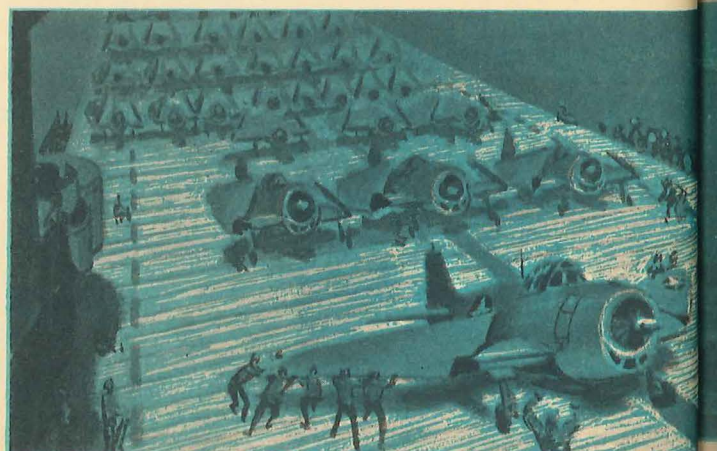
A month later, American scouting planes reported the Japanese fleet on the move again, this time apparently in full force, but divided into two groups. Altogether they consisted of five carriers, four battleships, eight heavy cruisers, twenty destroyers and numerous supply vessels. They were being followed by ten big transports carrying some 30,000 to 40,000 Japanese troops, all headed toward the island of Midway.

On June 4, 1942, the three remaining United States carriers struck. In the furious Battle of Midway that followed, the Japanese Navy lost four of its five carriers, one cruiser, and three destroy-

Map of the battle of the Coral Sea between naval forces of the United States and Japan.



The American attack force, headed for Midway, is shown lined up on the deck of the *Enterprise*.





ers, as well as suffering severe damage to two battleships. The United States loss was the carrier *Yorktown* and one destroyer. The remains of the Japanese fleet hurriedly retreated back the way it had come.

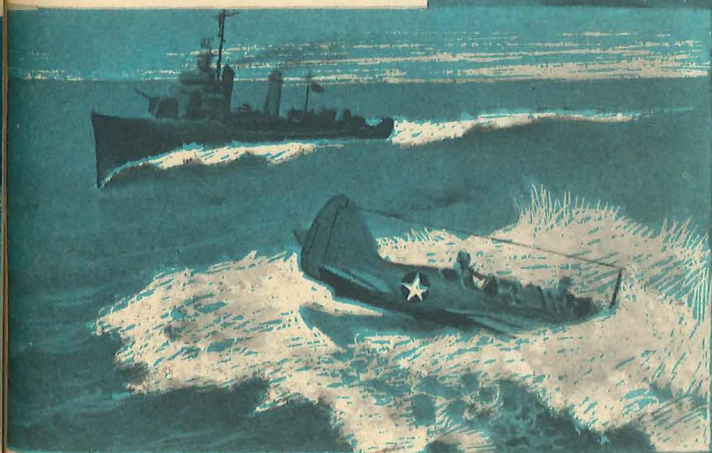
Midway was the turning point of the war in the Pacific. Japan had now lost its superiority in aircraft carriers, and thus its ability to cut supply lines to the

United States land forces that were building up in Australia. In the months that followed, many more carriers came out of American shipyards, far outstripping the capacity of the Japanese to replace their losses.

Now Japan, in the Pacific, like Germany in Europe, found itself on the defensive in order to hold what it had won in the early days of the war.

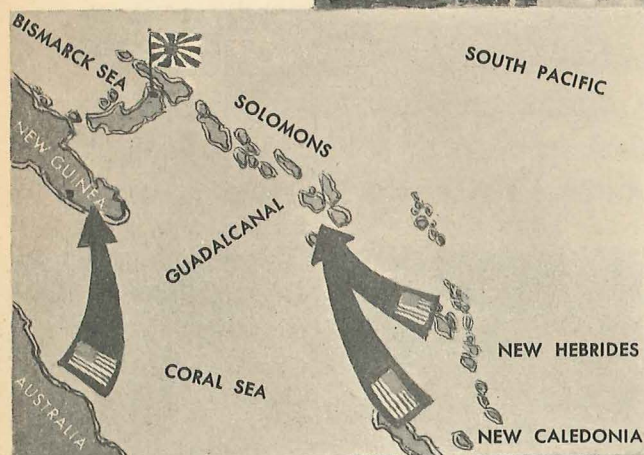
A close-up of the action in the battle of Midway.

An American destroyer steams to the rescue of the crew of an American bomber shot down during the action.

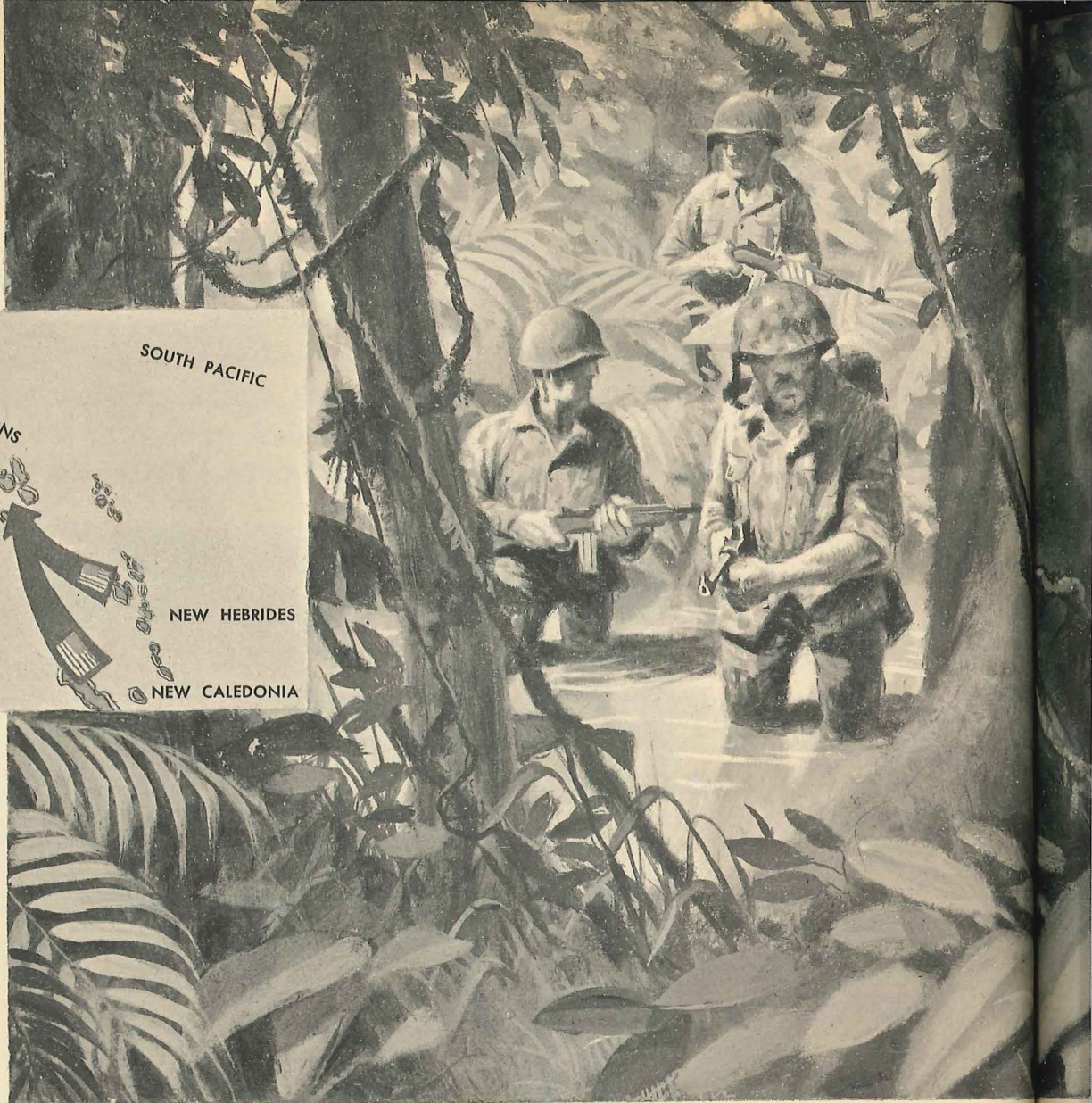




Months of terrible, exhausting battle in the jungle followed the landing on Guadalcanal.



The American counter-attack, which led to the reconquest of the Pacific, started with the landing of American troops on Guadalcanal and the landing of Australian and American troops on New Guinea.



**Why was the island so important?**

## Guadalcanal

The time had now come for American land forces to begin winning back the islands of the South Pacific that the Japanese had taken almost without opposition. The southernmost of these islands were the Solomons, chief among which was Guadalcanal, where the Japanese were completing an airfield.

After a violent barrage by naval guns and navy bombing planes, United States Marines landed on Guadalcanal in the first week of August, 1942. After a week of stiff fighting in the jungle, the Marines captured the airstrip and began to rebuild it for the use of American planes. But the Japanese troops, veterans of jungle fighting, retired into the hills and began a harassing defensive action.

In spite of the vigilance of United States ships offshore, thousands of Japanese troops were landed on the island

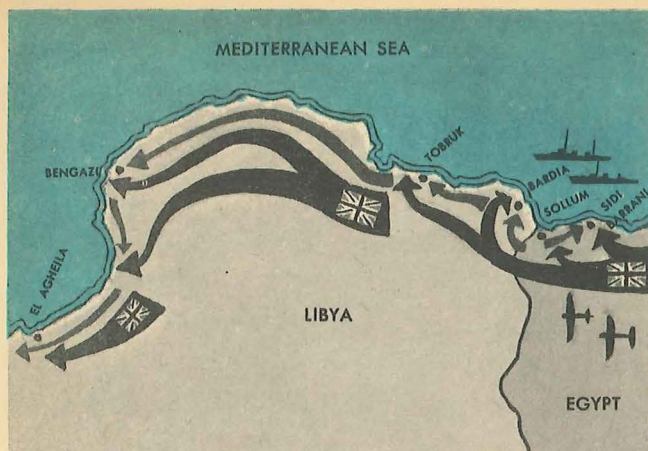




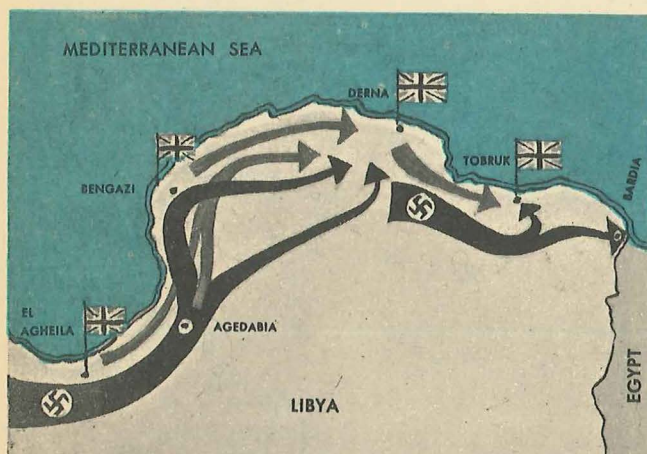
to reinforce the garrison. The Marines — and later, Army troops — doggedly fought on, mopping up the island yard by yard. In the sea battles offshore — in which the Japanese attempted to land reinforcements and supplies, and the United States Navy was determined to prevent such a move — another Japanese carrier was sunk.

It was not until the middle of February that the Americans won a complete victory on Guadalcanal. But this was the first firm toehold on the long and bloody road to Tokyo.



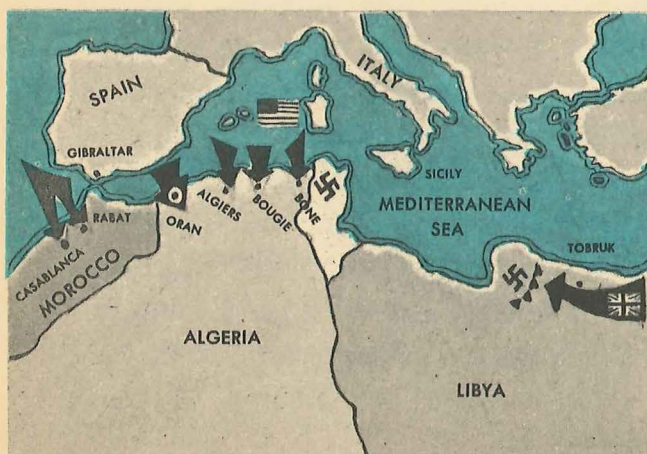


Over 100,000 prisoners were taken by the British at Sidi Barrani, Bardia, Tobruk and Benghazi. They outflanked and trapped the Italians, resulting in the failure of Italy's attempted invasion of Egypt.



The territory lost by the Italians was regained by the Germans, who came to the aid of their Axis partners. Rommel's tank divisions drove the British back to Tobruk, where Australian units — the "Rats of Tobruk" — made a gallant stand.

The beginning of defeat for the German armies started with the landing of Allied forces in North Africa. The British, who had won a victory at El Alamein, drove west, trapping the Axis armies between the Americans and themselves.



## The War in Africa

Who was the  
"Desert Fox"?

While Hitler's armies were running over Europe in the spring of 1940, Mussolini, in Italy, felt that he was being left out of things. His Axis partner was getting all the glory. He, too, wanted to be a conqueror. So he opened up the war on another front — North Africa.

His objective was Egypt, with its rich lands of the lower Nile delta, its great cities of Cairo and Alexandria and, most important, the Suez Canal. This vital waterway, which connected the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, was controlled by the British who prevented the Axis nations from using the canal. Its capture by the enemy would have been a tragic loss for the Allies.

In midsummer of 1940, Mussolini massed his armies in the Italian colony of Libya on the Egyptian frontier. From there he struck out across the desert toward Alexandria.

Although Egypt was an independent country, the Egyptians had a treaty with Great Britain, whereby British troops were stationed there to protect the interests of both countries. The British were desperately short of men and fighting equipment, but they were hardened desert-fighters and determined to drive the Italians back.

The Italians, who were poorly trained, were thrown back clear across Libya in a disorderly retreat. The men surrendered in groups of thousands.





The crew of a German tank surrenders to soldiers of the British 8th Army during the North African campaign.

Hitler, gloating over his easy victory in France, and secretly planning at that time his attack on Russia, did not want to get involved in Africa. But there was nothing he could do except bail out his partner. Therefore, he sent German military units to go to Mussolini's aid. In command of this force was General Erwin Rommel, one of Hitler's ablest officers.

The British supply lines were extended so far from their bases in Egypt that they were unable to maintain enough food for the men, ammunition for the guns and gasoline for the tanks. The British began to withdraw, though they left an Australian division in the

town of Tobruk. These tough Australians, known later as the "Rats of Tobruk," stood their ground and were a constant danger to Rommel's army.

General Rommel, who was to become an expert in desert warfare, came to be known as the "Desert Fox," because he was able to flank British units without warning and destroy or capture them. It seemed impossible to stop his relentless surge toward Alexandria.

At last, when the British had withdrawn to a thin line of defense only a few miles from Alexandria, they sent another general to command their army. His name was Bernard Montgomery. Montgomery, a rugged and fearless



fighter, was determined to stand his ground and then attack.

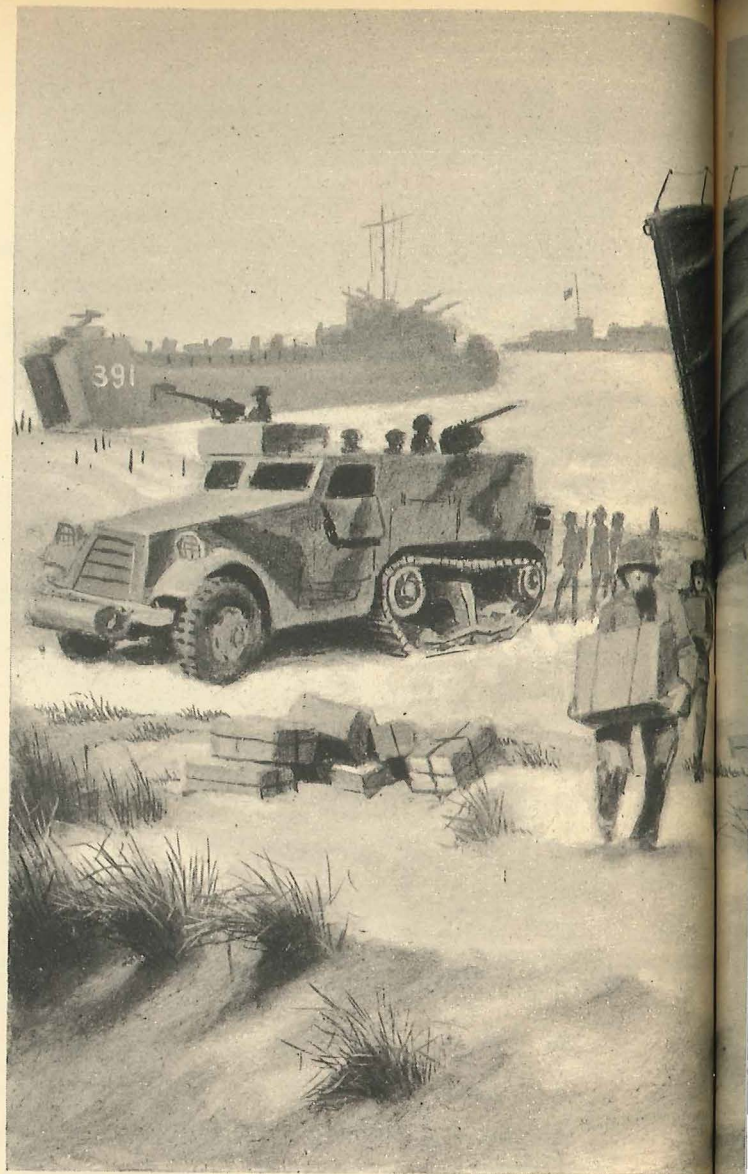
By clever planning, he managed to cut the enemy army up into several parts and then proceeded to annihilate them one by one. Now it was the Germans whose lines of supply were badly overextended. Rommel began a slow and stubborn retreat.

At about the same time that Montgomery began his counteroffensive, the first American army to see action against the Germans landed on the northwest coast of Africa in Morocco and Algeria. It was under the command of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was later to become President of the United States. This army and Montgomery's British forces began converging on the Germans to trap them in a pincers movement.

It was a long, drawn-out and bloody campaign. But on May 12, 1943, the last of the German army surrendered to the British and Americans. North Africa was now in Allied hands.



After defeating the Axis armies in North Africa, the victorious Allies turned their attention to the invasion of Europe. The first major assault was the island of Sicily, the bridge to the Italian mainland.

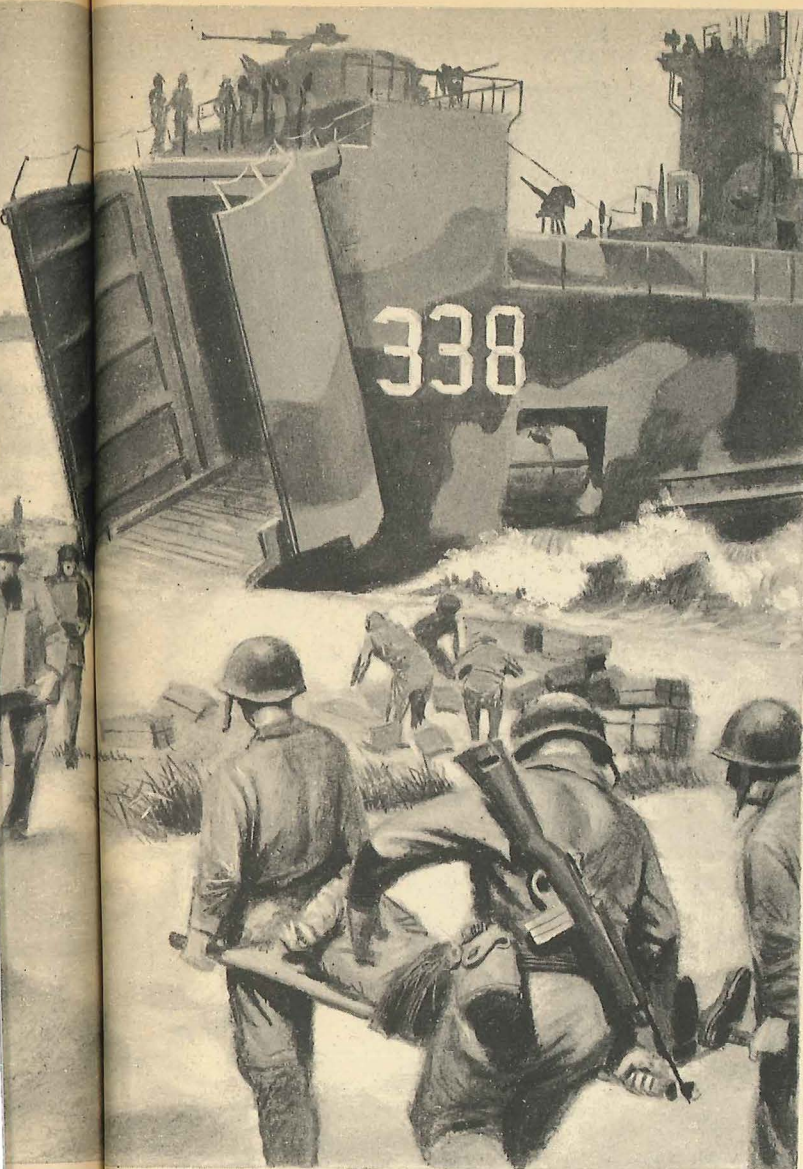


## The Italian Campaign

**What happened to Mussolini?**

With the Germans now driven out of Africa, General Eisenhower, who had been named Supreme Commander of Allied Forces, proceeded to launch an amphibious attack upon the continent of Europe by way of Italy. The first landings were to take place on the island of Sicily, which looks on the map like a football about to be kicked by





American soldiers, having established a beach-head on Sicily, evacuated their wounded and brought equipment ashore.

the Italian boot. The Allied armies were about to give it a much harder blow.

On July 10, 1943, the Allied invasion force of a quarter of a million men began their landings. For several weeks before, American and British bombers had been destroying coastal defenses, wiping out air bases, and blowing up harbors and railroad centers.

Italian soldiers, who had been driven into the war against their will by Mussolini, surrendered by the thousands. Many of them volunteered to help the Allied forces unload their supplies. The German troops, however, put up a stub-

born defense, although they were outnumbered and outgunned. It was not until August 17 that the fighting ended.

General Eisenhower at once went on with his plans to take his huge army across the narrow Straits of Messina and invade the Italian mainland.

Even before Eisenhower completed his conquest of Sicily, the Italian government had begun to cave in. Mussolini was ousted from his leadership and thrown into prison. A few weeks later, the new Italian regime surrendered to the Allies and declared war on Germany. The Germans rescued Mussolini from prison and set him up as leader in a puppet government in northern Italy, which they occupied. In 1945, in an attempt to escape the advancing Allies, Mussolini was caught and shot by his own people. The Italian people had never wanted to go to war in the first place. Hitler had simply used Mussolini as a puppet.

Now, in September 1943, the Allied armies hit the mainland of Italy. Slowly, relentlessly, they pushed their way northward. The German defenders fought them every agonizing step of the way.

When winter came, things had settled down to a sort of stalemate, with both opposing armies hammering at each other without mercy in the hills of southern Italy. But an even bigger explosion was being readied in northern Europe. So the Americans and the Germans were left to fight it out in Italy through a murderous winter and spring.



## Advance in the Pacific

What did General MacArthur mean by "island-hopping"?

After their lightning strike against Pearl Harbor, the Japanese had moved swiftly down through the Pacific, snatching up British, American, and Dutch island possessions as they went. Although the small garrisons on these islands put up gallant defenses, the Japanese forces were overwhelming.

Before General Douglas MacArthur, the commanding officer in the Philippines, escaped from that island in a submarine, he had made a dramatic statement: "I shall return!" Now he laid his plans to do so.

Australia and New Zealand, as parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations, had declared war on Italy, Germany, and Japan at the same time as Great Britain. Now Australia was to be used as the staging base for the reconquest of the Pacific.

President Roosevelt had ordered General MacArthur to leave the Philippines by submarine in order to take supreme command.

Many observers did not see how it would be possible for the American forces to fight step by step up through the Pacific and drive out the Japanese, island by island and country by country. But MacArthur had no intention of trying to accomplish such a bloody and laborious task.

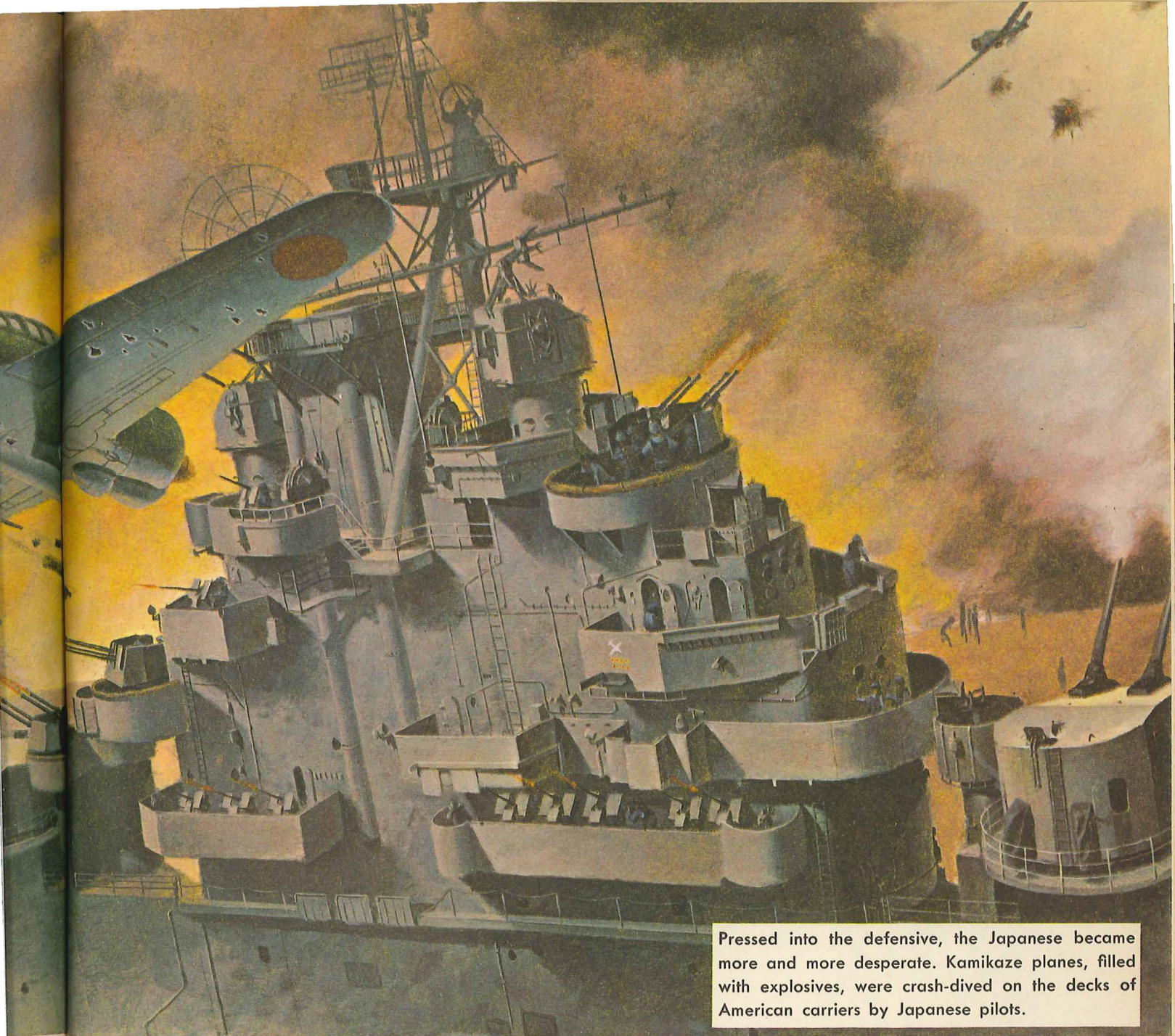
His plan was to take only the strategic islands, on which airstrips for long-range bombers could be built, and by-pass the others. The remaining Japa-

nese forces in the Pacific would be left to "die on the vine." With their supplies cut off by the American advance, the Japanese would be forced into surrender or starvation.

The advance began after the first success in the Solomons. From there, American amphibious forces, by now vastly superior to the Japanese, began a deadly game of island-hopping up the







Pressed into the defensive, the Japanese became more and more desperate. Kamikaze planes, filled with explosives, were crash-dived on the decks of American carriers by Japanese pilots.

Pacific islands. It was a long and bloody battle, and the Americans suffered heavy casualties in exchange for every island they took.

After the Solomons came the reconquest, by the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, of New Guinea, the Gilbert Islands, the Marshalls, Palau, the Marianas, the Philippines, Iwo Jima, and finally Okinawa.

Okinawa was on the front doorstep of Japan's main island group, and here the Japanese made their last and hardest-fought stand. It was in this battle that the Japanese air force first introduced its *kamakazi*, or suicide, planes as a last desperate resort.

The *kamakazi* planes were unarmored, and their pilots had no training beyond getting the planes off the ground



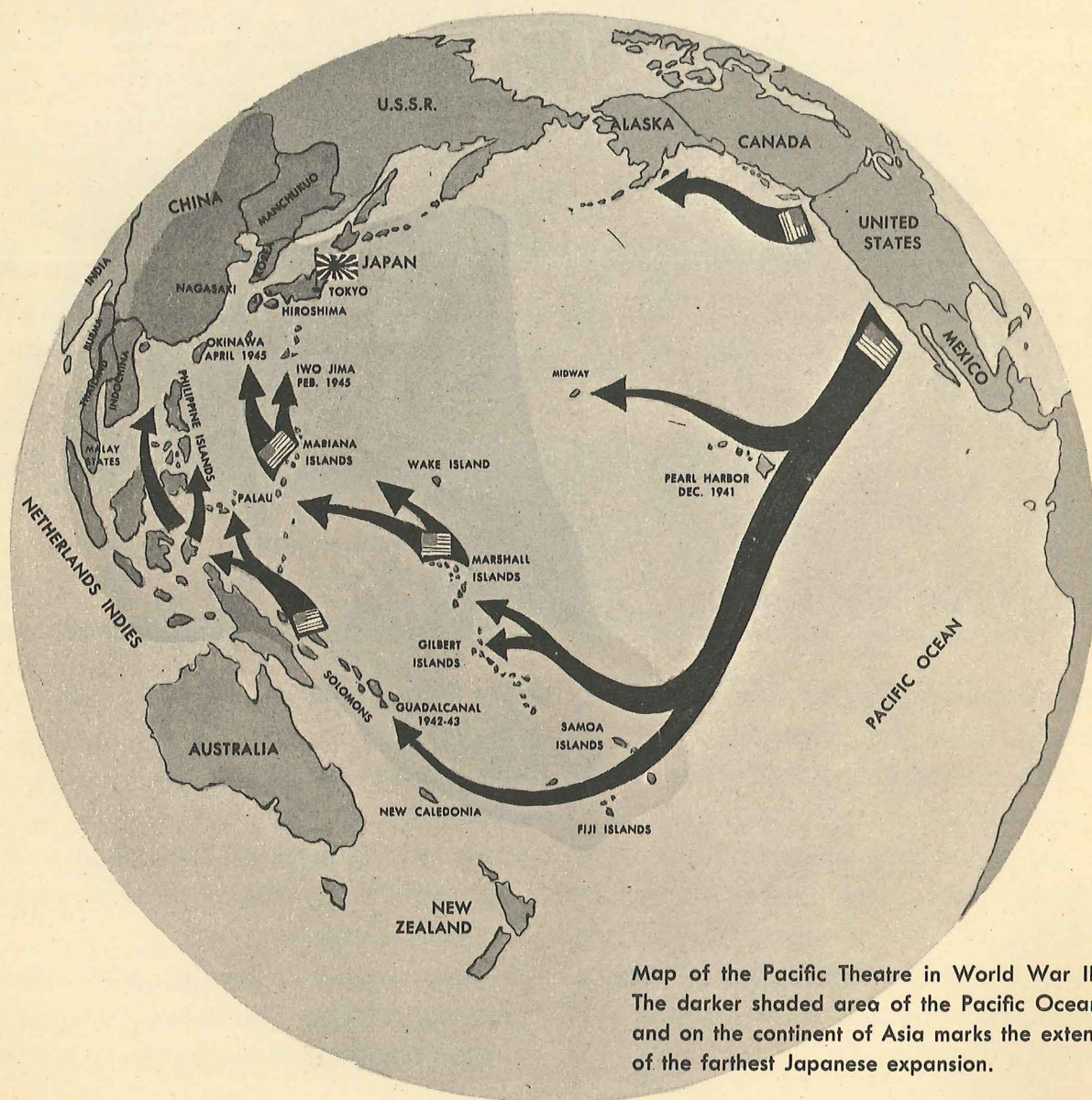
and controlling them in the air. Each *kamakazi* carried one bomb, and the mission of the pilot was to dive his plane into an American ship, deliberately sacrificing his own life in the process. A few made hits, but most were knocked down by American planes or anti-aircraft fire.

The battle for Okinawa, the final one of the Pacific war, began on April 1, 1945, and lasted for eighty-three days. The American invading forces numbered more than a quarter of a million men, backed up by 1,300 ships of the

Navy, including battleships and aircraft carriers.

The result was an extremely high casualty rate for the Japanese: 110,071 men were killed, and 7,400 captured, they lost 7,830 aircraft, and 16 ships, one of which was the *Yamato*, the world's largest battleship and one of the very few fighting ships remaining in the Japanese Navy.

When the frightful battle of Okinawa finally came to an end, nothing stood in the way of a final American assault on Japan itself.



Map of the Pacific Theatre in World War II. The darker shaded area of the Pacific Ocean and on the continent of Asia marks the extent of the farthest Japanese expansion.



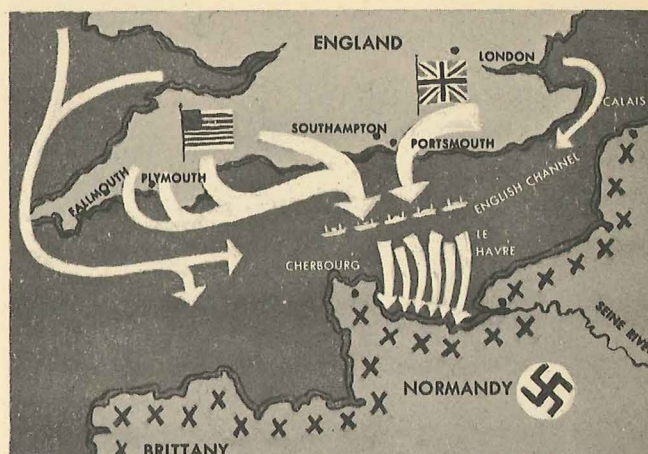
## Invasion of France and Germany

In the months that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor and America's entrance into the war against the Axis, the United States began building up its military power in England. By the middle of 1942, long-range bombers of the United States, along with planes of Great Britain's Royal Air Force, were making daily raids over Germany.

The Americans bombed by day and the British by night. This arrangement was made because the American planes, like the *Flying Fortress* and the *Liberator*, were more strongly armored than the British bombers and had a better chance of withstanding the attacks of the German fighters that came up in the daytime to meet them.

By 1944, Allied bombers were smashing hard at German industrial centers. Hamburg, center of Nazi submarine production, was almost totally destroyed. As the bombing increased in fury, other cities such as Dresden, Essen, and Dusseldorf were leveled.

Then the United States developed fighter-escort planes that could fly almost as far as the big bombers, and the range of the bombing raids was lengthened. Now the Germans were getting back a severe dose of their own medicine. Some of the missions were extremely long and all of them were dangerous. German anti-aircraft fire harassed the bombers all the way through German-held territory. Swarms of *Luftwaffe* fighters flew from German airfields to shoot them down.



Under the protection of air and naval forces, the Allied armies crossed the English Channel for the invasion of Normandy on the northwest coast of France. This was D-Day: June 6, 1944.

But although the losses in British and American aircraft were appallingly high, Germany's industries were slowly being wiped out. With one raid on Regensburg, where most of the ball-bearings for Nazi airplanes were manufactured, American bombers virtually brought German airplane production to a standstill.

American ground forces, as well as air forces, were also building up in England. It was obvious that a direct land invasion of France would be necessary before the war could be finally won. Furthermore, the Russians were demanding a "second front" to take some of the pressure off their own hard-pressed armies. General Eisenhower was brought from the Italian theater of war as Supreme Commander of the combined Allied armies.

For many months vast stockpiles of supplies — big guns, tanks, mortars, trucks, mountains of ammunition, fuel,



and food — had been accumulated for the attack. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers were especially trained in landing techniques. Thousands of landing craft were assembled to be ready at a moment's notice. The invasion was given the code name of *Operation Overlord*. The date for the big push was set for June 6, 1944. This was known as D-Day. (The "D" stands for the first letter of the word *day*.)

In the early morning of D-Day, thousands of British and American bombers dropped tens of thousands of tons of bombs on German defense positions along the French coast of Normandy. Then the infantry came in, wave after

wave, in assault boats, and hit the beaches at five different points. They dug in under heavy German fire and then proceeded to push inland.

All that day, and the next and the next and the next, the invasion forces poured into Normandy. Slowly, painfully, fighting furiously for every foot of ground, the Americans, British and Canadians advanced their columns into France. The German defenders did not give an inch without a fight. But they were outmanned and outgunned, and were outnumbered ten to one in the air. Even so, the *Wehrmacht* put up their stiffest fight of the war.

The invading Allied armies fanned

The invasion of the Normandy coast, after attacks from the air had softened the enemy's defense, began with the landing of Allied troops from special assault ships.





out in half a dozen directions at once. Thousands of men and thousands of tons of heavy equipment were landed on the Normandy beachheads every day, and the armies of the Allies grew stronger as they surged ahead.

House by house, farm by farm, the British and American soldiers fought their way through villages with such names as Caen, Bayeux, Carentan, St. Lô, Falaise, and St. Sauveur-de-Comte — names that will go down in history. As they passed, the land behind them lay in ruins. But at long last it was free.

The invading army swept east, and after two months of bitter fighting, its advance units entered Paris. An armored division, made up of Frenchmen who had managed to escape from the German occupation, was given the honor of being the first to enter the city. The Parisians lined the sidewalks and cheered them wildly, waving the French flags that they had kept carefully hidden ever since the Germans had come. The German garrison in Paris surrendered on August 25, 1944.

Six columns of British, Canadian and American troops now stormed across all of France, sweeping back the Germans as they went. Two other armies drove up out of Italy, pushing the *Wehrmacht* ahead of them. Hitler's armies were in full retreat. But it was an orderly retreat, and they fought desperately for every bit of ground they gave.

But the *Wehrmacht* had not lost its will to fight back. In December, Field Marshal von Rundstedt, the German commander, amassed the best of his remaining forces and prepared them for



Throughout much of Europe, scenes of ruin and devastation caused by the war were frequent sights.

one final, last-ditch effort to force the Allies back. He attacked the weakest part of the Americans' advancing line in the Forest of Ardennes, which lies in Belgium and Luxembourg. His plan was to split his attackers in two.

Von Rundstedt's counterattack hit the American army on the foggy morning of December 16, 1944. Snow lay thick on the ground beneath the trees. Taken completely by surprise, a large segment of the American army was quickly surrounded and cut off from its supply bases.



To make matters worse, some German soldiers were dressed in American uniforms and were able to speak English with an American accent. Penetrating the American lines, they issued fake orders to isolated units, which compounded the confusion.

For nearly three weeks it looked like the old, successful "blitzkrieg" tactics, with German tank columns thundering over the snowy landscape and gobbling up small American units. Then Allied reinforcements were rushed in, and the German "blitz" was turned back.

After the Battle of the Bulge — as the Nazi counterattack in the Ardennes was called — the Germans began their long, slow retreat back into Germany. They crossed the Rhine and then prepared to defend it.

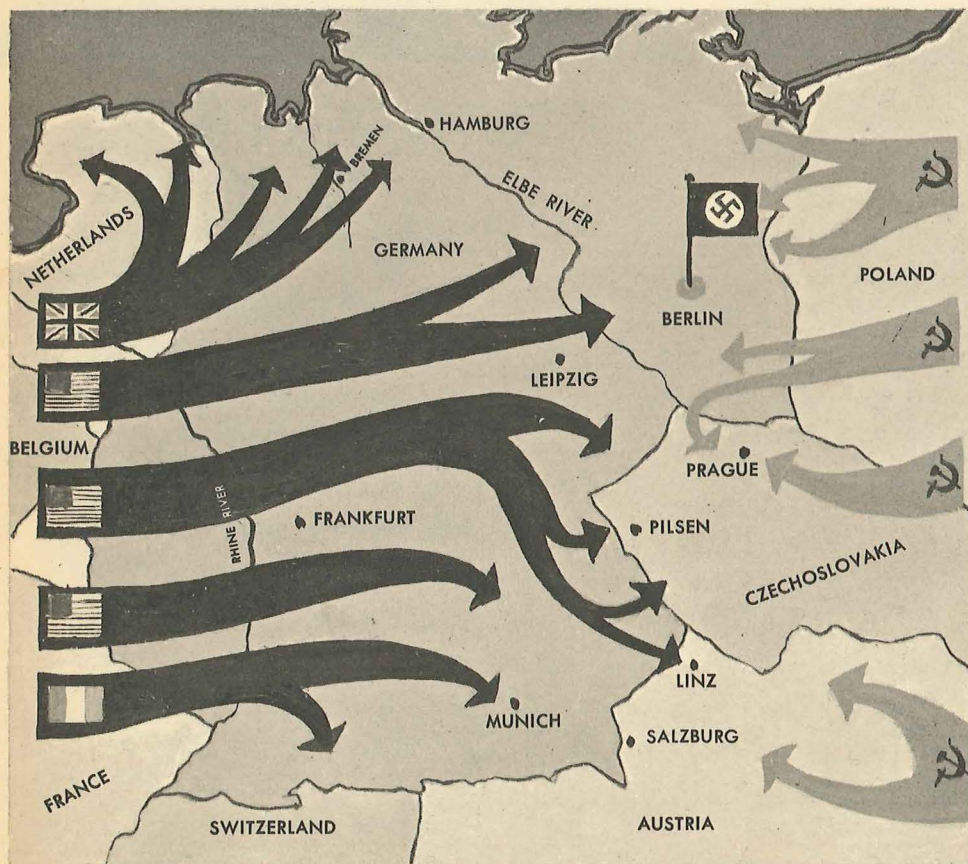
German engineers destroyed most of the Rhine bridges behind them. But in

their haste, they waited too long to blow up the great Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen. American advance elements took advantage of this mistake, and quickly threw several divisions across the river. Now Allied invaders were on German soil for the first time.

German bombers managed to blow up the bridge at Remagen a few days later. But by this time the Americans had built pontoon bridges, and the advance into Germany continued at a quickening pace.

On the "holy soil," as the Germans called their own country, they fought even harder than they had in France. But it was impossible for them to hold back the flood of the Allied attack.

All through the winter and spring of 1944-45, the last German strongholds fell one by one. Finally, there was only Berlin.



After the fighting on the Rhine River ended in an Allied victory, Allied armies poured into Germany. Russian troops entered the Nazi homeland from the east.



Germany surrendered unconditionally on May 7, 1945, ending the World War in Europe. Colonel General Alfred Jodl of the German high command signed the terms of surrender. It was received by Lieutenant General Walter B. Smith of the United States for the Allies. Jodl and other Nazi leaders were later tried and sentenced to be hanged for war crimes.



## The Fall of Berlin

What was  
V-E Day?

While British and American armies were driving the Germans out of France and back into their own country, the Russians were doing the same thing from the East. The German assault on Russia, which Hitler had said would be a quick and easy victory, had turned into a nightmare.

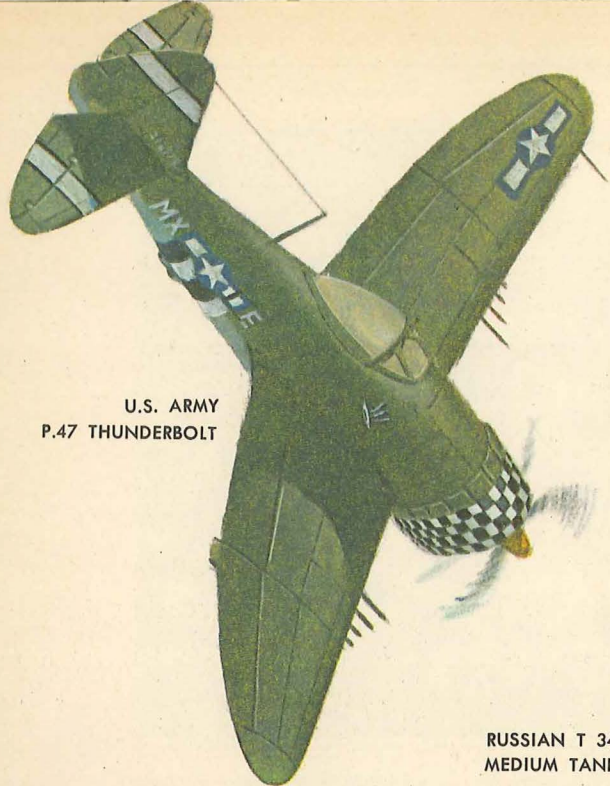
German armor bogged down in the deep Russian snows. Supply lines were cut. The *Wehrmacht* did not have enough food for its men nor ammunition for its guns. On the other hand, the Russians had been receiving lend-lease supplies from the United States, and as the Germans grew weaker, the Russians grew stronger. The Germans who managed to survive straggled back along the bleak road to Berlin.

Now what was left of the once-fear-some German army was caught between two irresistible forces, the British and Americans on one side and the Russians on the other. Men abandoned their equipment and began to surrender by the hundreds of thousands.

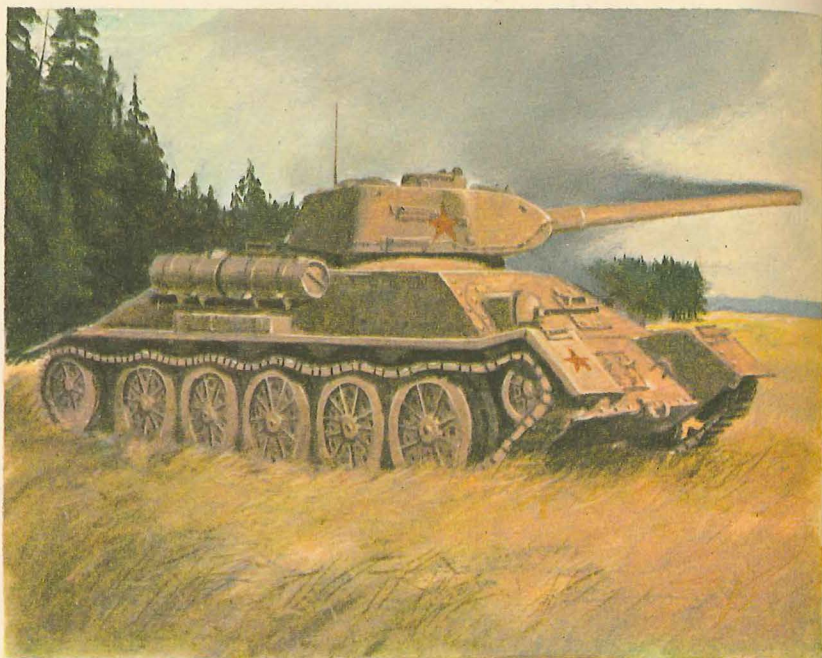
As the ruthless ring of fire and steel closed in on Berlin itself, Adolph Hitler, who had once proudly boasted that he would dictate to all Europe — and the world — shot himself in an underground bomb shelter. All around him the once great German capital lay in ruins, the shattered victim of Allied bombs.

On V-E Day (Victory-in-Europe Day), May 7, 1945, the last of the German armies surrendered and the war in Europe was ended.





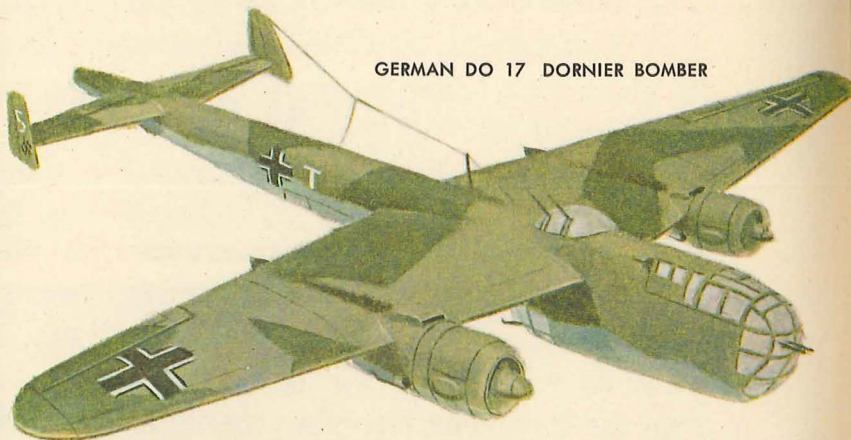
U.S. ARMY  
P.47 THUNDERBOLT



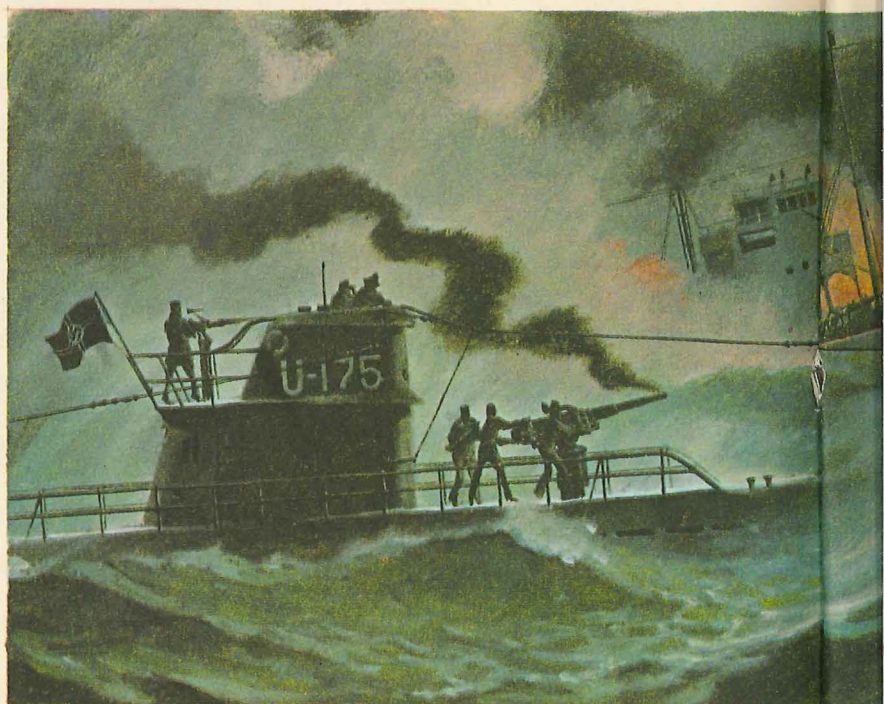
RUSSIAN T 34  
MEDIUM TANK



The most devastating weapon of all, the atomic bomb, was developed by America. It hastened the end of the war with Japan.



GERMAN DO 17 DORNIER BOMBER



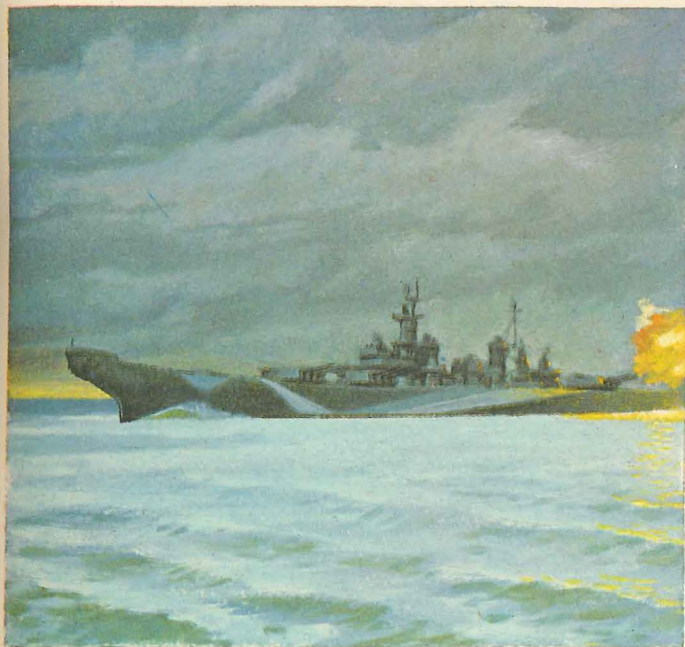




## Victory in Japan

What was  
V-J Day?

### THE WEAPONS OF WORLD WAR II



The New Jersey, an Iowa Class battleship, covering landings at Iwo Jima.

German submarines menaced Allied shipping in Atlantic waters during the early days of the war.



Ever since the American occupation of the Marianas, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, the main Japanese islands had been under constant bombardment by long-range bombers of the United States. The city of Tokyo was leveled by day-and-night fire-bomb raids, as were many other important Japanese cities. As Italy and Germany had already done, Japan was paying the price for its grandiose plans for world conquest.

Then the United States unveiled the biggest surprise in all the history of warfare. It was the deadliest weapon ever designed — the atomic bomb.

Work on this dreadful bomb, which cost about two billion dollars to produce, had begun in 1940. The work had been done in the utmost secrecy, and very few people knew about it.

It was known that Germany was experimenting with such a bomb, so American scientists worked furiously to win the atomic race. The United States succeeded in winning because the nation had better scientific equipment, more money to spend and most important, gifted scientists. In fact, many scientists who had been forced to flee from Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe worked on the atomic energy program for the United States.

Even after the bomb had been perfected, there was a great deal of controversy among our scientific, military, and political leaders about whether it should be used. It was sure to kill thousands of civilians and unleash a horrible force for destruction upon the world.





General of the Army Douglas MacArthur accepted the unconditional surrender of Japan aboard the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay. It occurred on September 2, 1945.

But most of the people in Washington argued that the use of the atomic bomb would bring a quick end to the war and save as many as a hundred thousand American lives in the event that a direct invasion had to be made on Japan.

On August 6, 1945, the world's first atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima by an American B-29 bomber. This one blast, with an explosive force of 20,000 tons of TNT, and released by the touch of one man's finger on a control, left the city in almost total ruins. Three days later, a second atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki.

With such weapons in American hands, the Japanese realized that all hope of winning the war was gone. They surrendered on V-J Day (Victory-over-Japan Day), September 2, 1945.

Now the long, bloody war was over, and the whole world breathed a sigh of thanksgiving. Hitler and Mussolini were dead. The Emperor of Japan declared publicly that he was not a god, but a human being without divine power.

But the war had cost a terrible price. The dead numbered in the millions, and the homeless in the hundreds of millions. Vast areas of Europe and Asia were left in ruins. In terms of money alone, that price had been almost one-and-a-half *trillion* dollars. Yet, at last, the world was at peace again.

## The War-Crimes Trials

Why were many Axis leaders put on trial after the war?

After the war had ended, a number of Axis leaders were accused and brought to trial for "crimes against humanity." These crimes were mainly brutal acts against innocent civilians that went far beyond the normal waging of a war against soldiers and military targets.

These crimes, most of which were committed by the Nazis, included the deliberate killing of civilians and pris-



oners of war; the sinking of unarmed ships; the torpedoing of hospital ships that were clearly marked with the Red Cross; the rounding up of helpless civilians and military prisoners for slave labor; the needless destruction of entire cities, towns and villages; and the ruthless plunder and looting of public and private property.

The most horrible of these crimes was the wholesale slaughtering of Jewish people in Germany and in the German-occupied countries. Men, women and children were rounded up and taken out to the forests to be shot, or they were taken to such Nazi concentration camps as Auschwitz, Dachau and Buchenwald, and there brutally murdered in gas chambers. During this period of unspeakable horror, six million Jews were put to death by the German Nazis. The dead included one million children.

The Jews were not the only people to suffer. In every country that the Nazis occupied, other innocent people — and freedom — perished. Hitler was also opposed to Christianity and planned to create in its place a Nazi religion in which the sword and the swastika, and not the Christian cross, would be the new symbols.

The Allies decided that the people who were responsible for the atrocities and for deliberately starting and waging warfare should be tried, and if convicted, punished. Many war crimes trials were held, the most important of which took place at Nuremberg, Germany. Another was held at Tokyo, Japan. Most of the defendants were found guilty and hanged.

## The United Nations

What is the purpose of the U.N.?

With total victory by the Allies now finally won, the war-weary world turned to the task of picking up its pieces and putting itself back together.

In the late fall of 1944 and the early spring of 1945 — before the war was actually over, but when the end was clearly in sight — representatives of the United States, Russia, Great Britain and China set the groundwork for an organization that was to be called the United Nations. This name had first been suggested by the United States President, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The object of this international body was to make sure that another World War would never happen again. All disputes between countries were to be settled in the United Nations by peaceful means. The invention of the atomic bomb, which could wipe out whole nations at a single blow, made another war unthinkable.

Today the United Nations has its headquarters in New York City. Almost all the nations of the world — from every continent — are member states.

Although international tension is once more building up in the world — between the Communists on one side and the free nations on the other — the United Nations has been a means thus far of averting total war.

All the peace-loving people of the world pray that the United Nations will continue to play this vital role — and that no historian of the future will ever have to write a book about "World War III."



## HIGHLIGHTS: 1922-1945

### 1922

- Oct. 30 Fascist "March on Rome," a revolutionary uprising of Mussolini's Fascist party.
- Oct. 31 Mussolini becomes prime minister of Italy — and dictator.

### 1931

- Sept. 18 Japanese invade Manchuria.

### 1933

- Jan. 30 Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany — and dictator.

### 1935

- March 16 Hitler re-establishes universal military training in Germany.
- Oct. 3 Italy invades Ethiopia

### 1936

- March 7 Hitler remilitarizes the Rhineland, defying Versailles Treaty.
- July 17 Spanish Civil war begins.
- Oct. 1 Franco becomes Spain's head.
- Oct. 27 Hitler and Mussolini form the Rome-Berlin Axis.
- Nov. 18 The Axis powers recognize Franco's dictatorial regime in Spain.
- Nov. 25 Japan and Germany sign anti-Comintern treaty.

### 1937

- July 7 Japan invades China.
- Nov. 6 Italy adheres to German-Japanese anti-Comintern treaty.

### 1938

- March 11 Germans enter Austria.
- March 12 Austria declared part of German Reich (Anschluss).
- Oct. 29 Munich conference.

### 1939

- April 7 Italy invades Albania.
- April 28 Hitler denounces German-Polish non-aggression pact.
- Aug. 23 Non-aggression pact signed between Russia and Germany.
- Aug. 29 Germany demands city of Danzig from Poland.
- Sept. 1 Germany invades Poland.
- Sept. 3 Britain, Australia, New Zealand and France declare war on Germany.
- Sept. 17 Russia invades east Poland.
- Sept. 28 Germany and Russia arrange to divide Poland between them.
- Nov. 24 Japanese sever China from French Indochina.
- Nov. 30 Russia invades Finland.

### 1940

- April 9 Germany invades Denmark and Norway.
- May 10 Germany invades Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland.
- May 12 Germany invades France.
- May 26-June 3 Dunkirk evacuated.
- June 10 Italy declares war on France and Great Britain.
- June 22 France surrenders.
- Aug. 4 Italy invades Br. Somaliland.
- Sept. 22 Japanese begin invasion of French Indochina.
- Sept. 27 Three-Power Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan.
- Oct. 28 Italy invades Greece.
- Nov. 20 Hungary joins the Axis.
- Nov. 23 Rumania joins the Axis.

### 1941

- April 6 Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece.
- April 13 Japan and Soviet Union sign a non-aggression treaty.

- April 17 Yugoslavia surrenders to Axis. Tito organizes guerrillas.

- June 22 Germany invades Russia.

- July 13 Great Britain and Russia sign mutual-aid treaty.

- Aug. 14 The Atlantic Charter.

- Aug. 25 British and Russian troops occupy Iran.

- Dec. 7 Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.

- Dec. 8 The United States Congress declares war on Japan.

- Dec. 10 Guam surrenders to Japan.

- Dec. 11 Germany and Italy declare war on the United States. The United States Congress declares war on Germany and Italy.

- Dec. 23 Wake Island surrenders to Japan.

- Dec. 25 British in Hong Kong surrender to Japanese, who continue to extend pressure on Southeast Asia.

### 1942

- Jan. 2 Manila falls to Japan.

- Jan. 11 Japanese forces land in the Dutch East Indies.

- Feb. 8 Burma invaded by Japanese.

- Feb. 15 Singapore, in Malaya, surrenders to Japan.

- Feb. 27 The Allies lose the Battle of the Java Sea.

- March 7 Dutch East Indies occupied by Japan.

- April 9 Bataan falls to Japan.

- April 18 U. S. aircraft raid Tokyo.

- May 4-8 The Allies win the Battle of the Coral Sea.

- May 6 Corregidor falls to Japan.

- June 3-6 The Allies win the Battle of Midway.

- June 21 Germans seize Tobruk.

- July 2 The British stop the German advance at El Alamein.

- Aug. 7 American marines land on the island of Guadalcanal.

- Oct. 23-Nov. 3 Britain takes the offensive at El Alamein.

- Nov. 7-8 Allies land in North Africa.

- Nov. 12 British retake Tobruk.

- Nov. 19 Beginning of Russian counter-offensive near Stalingrad.

### 1943

- Jan. 14-24 Casablanca conference.

- Feb. 2 German defeat at Stalingrad.

- March 13 Japanese forces in China retreat across the Yangtze River.

- May 12 Axis defeated in Africa.

- May 23 Japanese end their resistance on Attu in the Aleutian Islands.

- July 10 Allies invade island of Sicily.

- July 26 Mussolini resigns and is placed under arrest. Marshal Badoglio dissolves Fascist party and forms new Italian government.

- Sept. 3 The Allies land on Italian mainland. Italian government signs armistice agreement with the Allies.

- Sept. 13 General Chiang Kai-shek elected president of China.

- Oct. 13 Italy declares war on Nazi Germany.

- Nov. 1 American troops land on Bougainville in the Solomon Islands.

- Nov. 20 United States marines land on Makin and Tarawa.

- Nov. 22-26 Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek confer at Cairo, Egypt. They pledge defeat of Japan and liberation of Korea.

- Nov. 28-Dec. 1 Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin agree on invasion of Europe at Teheran conference in Iran.

### 1944

- Jan. 27 Russian army stops German attack on Leningrad.

- Jan. 31 United States forces attack Kwajalein atoll.

- Feb. 17 United States Navy raids Truk Island.

- Feb. 29 Allied forces land in the Admiralty Islands.

- March 19 Germany invades Hungary.

- March 22 Japan invades India.

- June 6 D-day in Europe.

- June 15-July 9 The United States wins the Battle of Saipan.

- June 15-16 B-29's begin strategic bombing of Japanese mainland.

- June 19-20 United States Navy wins the Battle of the Philippine Sea.

- July 20-Aug. 3 Guam reconquered by United States forces.

- Aug. 25 Paris is liberated.

- Sept. 15-Oct. 13 United States forces invade Palau Islands.

- Oct. 20 U. S. Army lands on Leyte.

- Oct. 23-26 Decisive defeat of the Japanese navy by the United States Pacific Fleet in the Battle for Leyte Gulf in Philippine Sea.

- Dec. 16 The Germans start counter-offensive (Battle of the Bulge).

- Dec. 27 The Allies stop German offensive at Battle of the Bulge.

### 1945

- Jan. 9 United States troops land on Luzon in the Philippines.

- Jan. 21 Hungary declares war on Nazi Germany.

- Jan. 22 A land route to China is opened by Allies.

- Feb. 11 Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin sign Yalta agreement, dealing with post-war problems.

- Feb. 13 Russians occupy Budapest, capital of Hungary.

- Feb. 19 United States Marines land on Iwo Jima.

- April 1 United States forces land on Okinawa.

- April 12 President Roosevelt dies; Truman becomes President.

- April 13 Russians invade Vienna.

- April 25 Troops of United States and Russia meet at Torgau, Germany.

- April 28 Mussolini is executed.

- May 1 German forces in Italy surrender to Allies.

- May 1 Suicide of Hitler announced.

- May 2 Berlin falls to Russian units.

- May 7 V-E day: Germany surrenders at Reims, France.

- July 17-Aug. 2 The Allies issue the Potsdam Declaration (preparation of peace plans.)

- Aug. 6 Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan.

- Aug. 9 Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan.

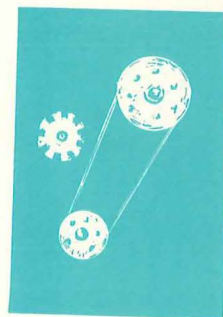
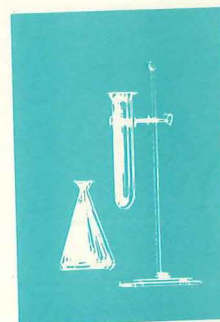
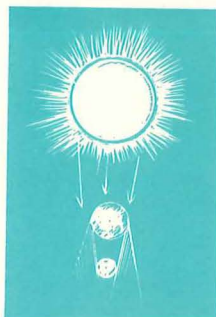
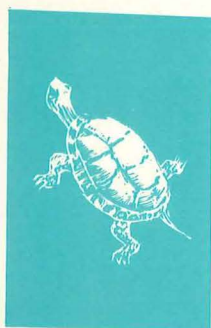
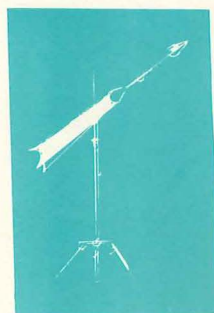
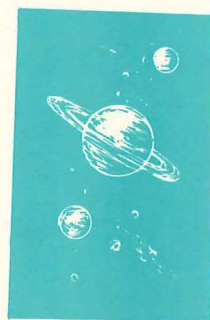
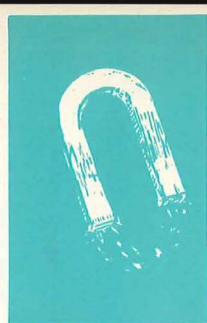
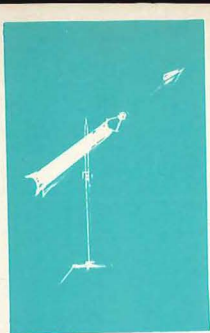
- Sept. 2 V-J-day: Japan signs surrender terms aboard *Missouri*.

- Sept. 8 Japanese military units in China surrender.

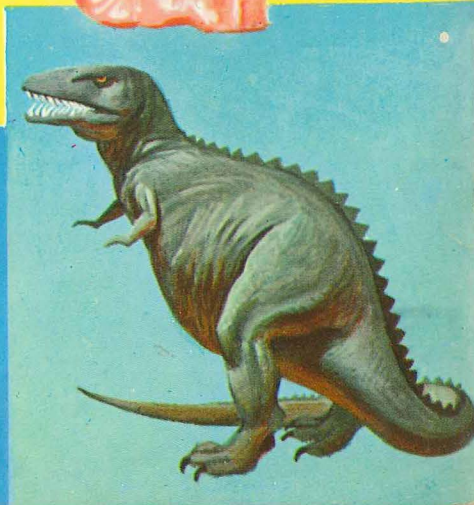
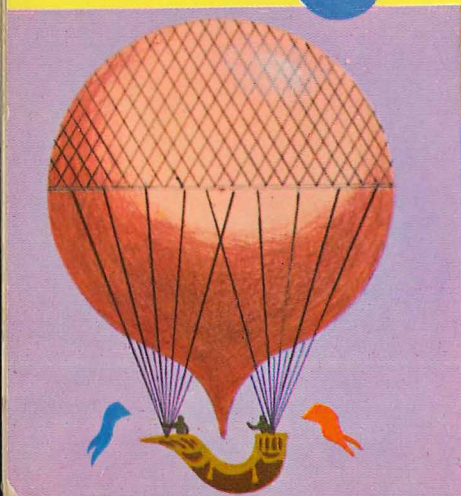
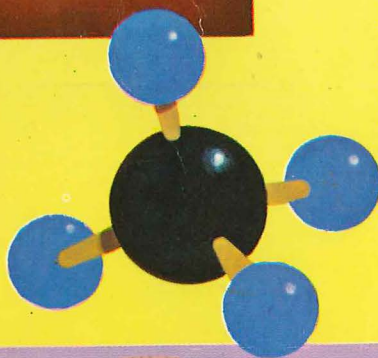
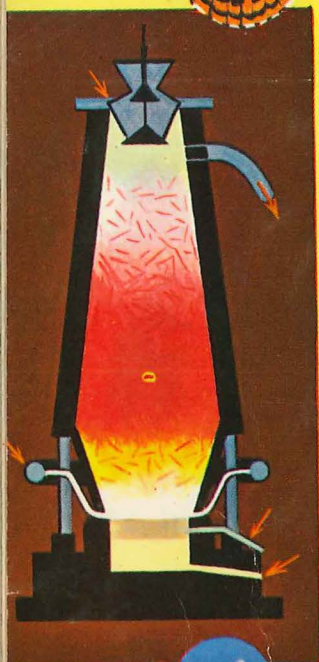
- Sept. 12 Japanese forces in Southeast Asia surrender.

- Oct. 24 United Nations established.









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